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IN QUEST OF GOD

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IN QUEST OF GOD

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE CHINESE EMPIRE.

ISLAM IN CHINA.

PIONEER WORK IN HUNAN.

FAITH AND FACTS.

HUDSON TAYLOR
The Man Who Dared.

SELLING ALL TO BUY THE FIELD.

JOHN W. STEVENSON.

HEIRS TOGETHER
of the Grace of Life.

Photo. *By C. H. Judd.*

IN QUEST OF GOD.

Missionary and Buddhist Priest at the Gate of the "Monastery of the Immortals."
"Tidings of Great Joy."
"How shall they hear without a preacher?"

Frontispiece.

IN QUEST OF GOD

THE LIFE STORY OF PASTORS CHANG & CH'Ü, BUDDHIST PRIEST & CHINESE SCHOLAR

ILLUSTRATED

BY
MARSHALL BROOMHALL, M.A.
EDITORIAL SECRETARY, CHINA INLAND MISSION

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TO

ALL WHO

HAVE BEEN FELLOW-LABOURERS IN THE GOSPEL

WITH

PASTORS CHANG AND CH'Ü

"The quest of faith is not simply an intellectual exercise in dialectic as to whether there be a God. . . . It is far more than that. It is essentially a personal quest, undertaken not by the speculative side of man's nature, but by the whole of his nature, and therefore, what it seeks is not a mere category of thought, but what will meet and satisfy personal needs. Whether or not this be a hopeless quest, certainly not less than this is what the human spirit—something more profound, complex, and passionate than a merely intellectually speculative spirit—has ever sought and ever will seek. It never found simpler, yet truer and more pathetic utterance than in the old words of the exiled Hebrew psalmist, 'My soul is athirst for God, even the living God.'"—CARNEGIE SIMPSON.

PREFACE

THE pedestrian on his tramps is not infrequently led into unexpected by-paths. So is the author. This little book deals with one small, out-of-the-way corner of a much larger field the writer had purposed to cover. It had been his intention to publish an historical sketch of all the stations of the China Inland Mission on the occasion of the Mission's jubilee in 1915, and for that purpose he collected considerable material from many quarters. On account of the war the intended volume was never published, but the manuscript prepared now exists in three bound volumes of over one thousand sheets of typed script. Three duplicate volumes, sent to Shanghai for purposes of reference, lie somewhere at the bottom of the Mediterranean, having been lost in the torpedoed *Yasaka Maru*.

With the abandoning of the original plan another purpose took its place, and that was the preparation of a series of small books entitled "The Story of the Provinces," each little volume dealing with one province only. Having lived and laboured in Shansi, the writer commenced on familiar ground, with a result that one part of the contemplated story has grown into the present volume. With

Mrs. Howard Taylor's widely read *Life of Pastor Hsi* and Miss Cable's graphic story, *The Fulfilment of a Dream*, dealing with other areas of the same province, it has seemed best not to proceed with the larger scheme but limit this book to the area west of the Fen River, where Pastors Chang and Ch'ü lived and laboured.

Although the writer is familiar with the district and the leading characters referred to, it would have been impossible to have written these pages without much detailed information generously placed at his disposal by Mr. Albert Lutley, who possesses an unequalled acquaintance with the persons and places referred to. For many of the personal details in the lives of Pastor Chang and Pastor Ch'ü the writer is also indebted to his sister, Mrs. Gilbert Ritchie, who, during her residence at Taning, had taken down the story of their early days from their own lips. These valuable autobiographical notes were in the possession of Mrs. Howard Taylor, and were very kindly handed by her to the writer, together with the ground-plan of the Buddhist Temple at Mulberry Crag originally drawn by Mr. W. G. Peat, who was murdered in that neighbourhood in 1900.

In addition to the foregoing, unpublished manuscripts and diaries by Mr. William Key and the late Miss Whitchurch have supplied helpful information, as well as the published pages of *China's Millions* and other volumes.

Every care has been taken to secure, so far as possible, accuracy in detail. It has not, however, been always possible to harmonise all the available

records—so far as the exact sequence of events is concerned. In such cases preference has, generally speaking, been given to the autobiographical notes of Pastors Chang and Ch'ü.

While the author was fortunately able to submit the first draft of his manuscript to Mr. Lutley and other friends for criticism, he accepts full responsibility for what is now published, since the original draft has been supplemented, recast, and entirely re-written.

The quotations at the head of the chapters are for the most part taken from the late Professor Gwatkin's *Early Church History*, in order to suggest the way in which apostolic conditions are reproduced in the mission-field to-day.

The Rev. Campbell Moody's valuable study, *The Mind of the Early Converts*, only came into the writer's hands after the text of this book had been passed for press; otherwise he would have been tempted to compare some of its findings with the experiences of Pastors Chang and Ch'ü. In not a few particulars they will be found to confirm Mr. Moody's conclusions, but occasionally to suggest contrasts or exceptions.

May this simple story of the quest of God help to emphasise the great responsibility laid upon us all of proclaiming to those who know it not the revelation of the Father through His Son Jesus Christ.

MARSHALL BROOMHALL.

China Inland Mission, London,
March 2, 1921.

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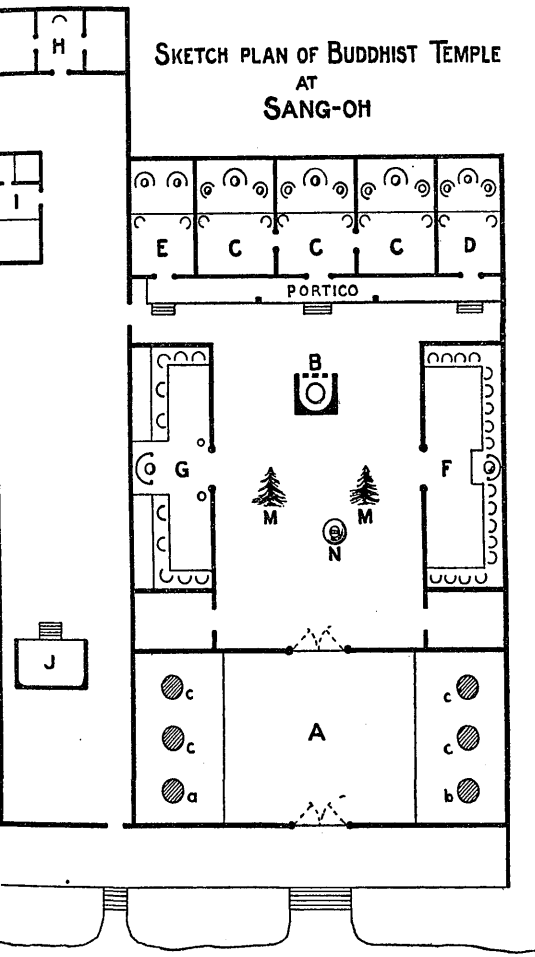
Sketch plan of Buddhist Temple at Sang-oh



A. Entrance Hall.
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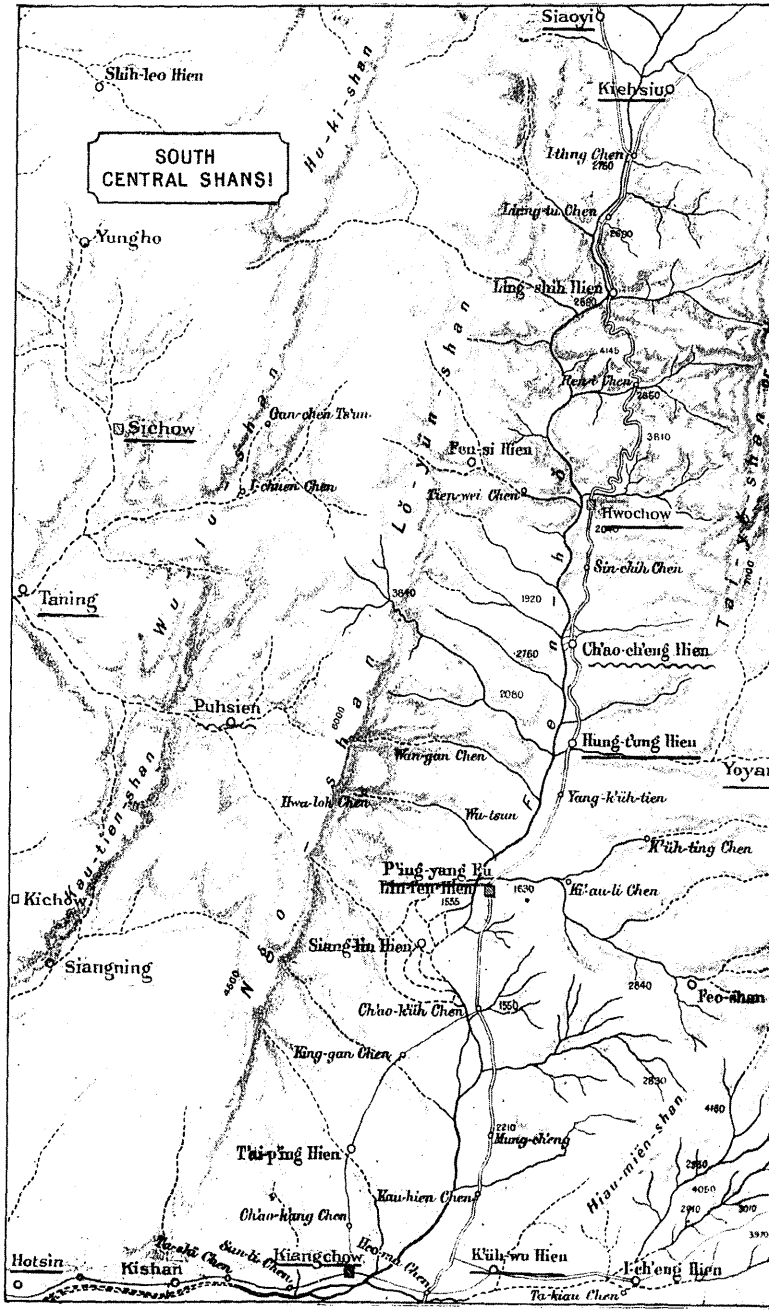
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Tang-tu Chen
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Yungho
Ling-shih Hien
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Tien-t Chen
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Küh-wu Hien
I-ch'eng Hien
Ta-kiau Chen

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I

A DISCIPLE OF BUDDHA

At that time, not knowing God, ye were in bondage unto them which by nature are no gods.—GAL. iv. 8.

NESTLING among the terraced hills of western Shansi, some twelve miles from the diminutive city of Taning, may be found the little village of Mulberry Crag (Sang-oh). In this quiet spot, shut off from the central highway of the province and from the great world beyond by a somewhat lofty mountain range, there lived, best part of a century ago, a farmer and his wife named Chang. This couple were one of thirty families whose fields and possessions were located in this sequestered valley with its picturesque stream. Their home, it was true, was only a cave dwelling, such as is common in the loess region of North China, but this humble abode, with its arched and plastered ceiling, its well-finished doors and windows, was both warm in winter and cool in summer. Though such a dwelling lacks the air and light of our modern homes, it was, with its fireplace and chimney, far more comfortable than the term "cave dwelling" may suggest to Western readers.

Being a hardy couple and inured to a simple life, Chang and his wife had few wants, and these were almost entirely supplied by the produce of their own few acres of land. But there was one real and even bitter sorrow in their otherwise contented and simple lot—they had no son. Such a deprivation was in their eyes and in the eyes of their neighbours "a reproach among men." That they should have no male descendant to offer the yearly sacrifice, upon which not only their own future welfare, but that of their revered ancestors in the other world depended, meant that they and their forebears would be numbered among the "orphan spirits." This was nothing less than a calamity and an unpardonable offence, for the avoidance of which even Confucius allowed polygamy and divorce.

It was true that several children had been born to them, but they had all, with the exception of one girl, died in childhood; and as the dead bodies of these their much-longed-for offspring had been taken out for burial upon the hillside, the hearts of the parents had been wrung with bitter and hopeless anguish. At such times their relatives and neighbours, instead of bringing them words of consolation and of hope, had all too plainly hinted that the bereaved couple had manifestly offended the gods, for nothing other than their own offence could have been the cause of their children's untimely death.

In their distress Chang and his wife had repeatedly offered sacrifices at the village temple, but it was evident that the anger of these much-feared deities was not to be easily appeased, for one after another of the little ones had fallen victims to the

malice of some malicious spirit. At last, like Hannah of old, the sorrowing couple unburdened their hearts to the priest in charge, and in response to his suggestion they made a solemn vow that if the gods would but look in pity upon them in their affliction and give them a man child, he should be devoted to the service of Buddha all the days of his life. It was true that as a priest he might never be allowed to marry, and therefore the family line would inevitably die out, but better a son with no offspring than no son at all, and though he would have to forsake his father's house[1] and discard the family name, this would be no worse than was always the case with a daughter who marries.

In due time another child was born, and, to the parents' unspeakable joy, the little stranger was a son. According to Chinese custom the usual offerings were sacrificed to the gods, and for a few years the child was allowed to remain with his mother.[2] But when still young the vow had to be performed for fear of dire consequences, and so at length the little lad was taken to the temple and committed to the care of the priest in charge.

What this act must have meant can easily be imagined by those who have read the story of Hannah, for her words, with but few alterations, could have been used by these parents in China. The idol of their hearts and the hope of their future, of whom they could truly say, "For this child I

[1] A common Chinese term for a Buddhist priest is *Ch'uh-Kia-tih*, "one who has gone out from home."

[2] It is not uncommon for children in China to remain unweaned for several years.

prayed," had, with strangely mingled feelings of thankfulness and sorrow, to be taken to the temple and solemnly dedicated to the priesthood, and then handed over to the old priest, like another Samuel to another Eli. How much alike these incidents, and yet how far removed!

Little Chang in his temple home among the idols was kindly treated by the old priest, and a real friendship sprang up between them. The discipline of the early years was by no means strict, and considerable liberty was permitted. Not until he was eight years old could he be admitted into the order as a novice, and up to that time he moved somewhat freely between the temple and the place of his birth, joining not infrequently in the games on the village street.

One incident of those days may be recorded as an illustration of the superstitions of the time. It so happened that one day the doorway with its porch, which gave entrance into the courtyard of his home, fell down, and among the debris was found a great knife about a foot in length. Chang himself had no distinct memory of this incident, but had subsequently heard it discussed among his seniors. Such a weapon embedded in the very porch of the home was regarded as the secret of the misfortunes which had befallen the family. Evidently some workman, so it was asserted, who had had some grudge or cause for enmity against the family, had done this evil deed. No wonder, therefore, that his father, and his uncle too, had never been able to rear a son.

After his eighth birthday, when he was considered

old enough " to drive away crows," he was admitted into the Buddhist order, or congregation, as a *Sha-mi* or novice. This term is defined as " ceasing from worldly occupations and engaging in loving duties to all creatures." On this solemn occasion, child though he was, he had to take upon himself the following ten vows :

I will not kill.

I will not steal.

I will not marry or give way to vice.

I will not lie.

I will not drink wine.

I will not decorate myself with flowers or anoint my body with perfumes.

I will not attend dances or theatricals.

I will not use a luxurious seat or elevated couch.

I will not eat save at fixed hours.

I will not possess cattle, gold, silver, or precious stones.

He was now set more regularly to work in the temple, to sweep the courtyards, to carry earth, and to keep the doors, for the priests were not infrequently away for funerals or other religious occasions. During all this time he was being instructed by the priest in charge, and, in consequence of the affection which existed between them, he received a better education than was customary among the priests of the district. At the age of eleven or twelve years he began the study of the Buddhist classics, the Code of Discipline, Buddha's Discourses, and the Metaphysics, known as the *San-ts'ang*, the triple canon of Buddhism. He also commenced to learn music. The study of the books

was to him altogether uncongenial and wearisome, but he experienced great enjoyment in the learning to play on the various musical instruments, the Pandean pipe, the flute, and another instrument the English equivalent of which is not easily determined. He soon became an accomplished musician according to local standards and taste.

From a child little Chang had been averse to becoming a priest, and when about eighteen years of age his parents, who were then well advanced in life and had no other son, began to entertain the hope that they might be permitted to redeem him, their only son, from the temple service. With this ambition they visited the temple and cast lots before the Buddhist trinity. The character for priest, *seng*, was written upon one slip of bamboo and the character for layman, *suh*, upon another. These slips were then shuffled in a bamboo receptacle and the lot drawn. To the bitter disappointment of both the parents and the son the character for priest came forth, and so the young man was left to continue his training and his temple life.

At the age of twenty, the earliest age at which admittance into the full order, or Buddhist congregation, is permitted, he made application for ordination. In this solemn act there are three separate ceremonies corresponding to the three stages of training, but these are not infrequently crowded into the space of a few days. Up to the closing of the last dynasty only certain monasteries held Government permits for the right of ordination, and in order that one journey should suffice, in a land where travelling is by no means easy, the ordination

ceremonies were brought within the compass of one visit. At the first ceremony the applicant is admitted as a neophyte; at the second he receives the tonsure, the robes, and the bowl of his profession, and promises obedience to the two hundred and fifty rules of the Pratimoksha; but at the final and most important ceremony, called in China *Sheo P'u-sa Kiai*, he receives the fifty-eight precepts of the monastic code, the *Fan wang King*. On this occasion he repeats three times the vows which he made as a neophyte, though in a somewhat different form, and then recites the following well-known formula:

"I go for refuge to the Buddha," *i.e.* "I will imitate him in all his doings."

"I go for refuge to the Law," *i.e.* "I will accept all his ideas of the impermanency of earthly things and the necessity of absolute renunciation."

"I go for refuge to the Order," *i.e.* "I renounce society, property, matrimonial and family life, and see no salvation outside the pale of the church."

Upon this last occasion the seal is set to the vows by the branding of the candidate's shaven head. In this there appears to be some diversity of method dependent upon whether the whole ordination is performed at one period or not. The branding may be of only three places, but may extend to as many as eighteen. The torture of this Buddhist ordination ceremony, by which the priest is set apart for ever from the world, has been described in the following words by one who has himself visited many of the Buddhist monasteries in China:

"Kneeling in rows before the altar, little cones

of inflammable powder (*moxa*), generally nine in number, but sometimes twelve or more, are placed upon their newly-shaven heads, and as each vow is pronounced, of obedience, poverty, chastity, renunciation of kith and kin, abstinence from flesh, etc., each of these cones is successively set alight to brand that promise ineffaceably upon the person of the devotee. At first the pain is endured in stoic silence, but with each succeeding burning it becomes more and more necessary to drown the cries of the agonised and fainting future monks and nuns under the beating of drums and gongs and singing of loud chants by the attendant ministers of this weird solemnity."[1]

By some such ceremony as this Chang became a *ho-shang* or monk and entered upon the full duties of his order. But he was not satisfied, his mind throughout being haunted with doubts as to the truth of the faith he had adopted. During his early days in the temple his much-respected teacher had upon one occasion said to him, "Reading these Buddhist books really doesn't count; learning these musical instruments also doesn't count. It may be pleasant to listen to, but it is false—it really counts for nothing." These words Chang had frequently pondered, and they had kept him from expecting full satisfaction in his calling as a priest; but more was to follow.

In the long, quiet evening hours, when the temple duties allowed, Chang and the old priest, who was now well advanced in years, frequently had serious

[1] Clennell, *The Historical Development of Religion in China*, p. 99.

and prolonged conversation on religious subjects. In the midst of one of these the venerable head of the temple, when laying bare with greater frankness than usual some of the deepest thoughts and feelings of his heart, suddenly startled his younger friend by saying, "These three religions of ours, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, do not contain all the truth. Another religion will come from the west as Buddhism[1] did, and that will be the truth. Should this come in your lifetime be sure to welcome and investigate it."

Such an utterance by his much-respected father in the Buddhist faith came to young Chang as a prophetic warning and made a deep and lasting impression upon his mind. Subsequently he himself had a dream or revelation when lying ill in the temple. Thinking that he was about to die, he was anxiously pondering the words of his teacher, and at the same time wondering whether, after all, he

[1] The popularly accepted story of the advent of Buddhism into China is full of interest and suggestion. It is stated that in A.D. 61 the Emperor Ming-ti, in consequence of a dream, in which he saw a golden figure flying from heaven, sent a special embassage to the West. This embassy reached India and brought back from that country two Buddhist priests with books and relics. Nevertheless a number of Buddhist missionaries—probably eighteen—reached China as early as 250 B.C., and their images occupy a conspicuous place in the temples in China to-day.

It was not until A.D. 1410 that the Chinese obtained a complete edition of the Buddhist Canon. The modern edition, known as the Northern collection, was not completed until A.D. 1573–1619. The earliest edition known in Ceylon was dated A.D. 410–432, a hundred years later than New Testament manuscripts still extant. Not a single ancient Buddhist manuscript remains.—See Eitel's *Buddhism*.

really would attain to immortality in the "Western Paradise" [1] of which Northern Buddhism teaches—a doctrine widely differing from the Nirvana of Southern Buddhism. In the midst of these meditations he heard as it were a voice saying, "The true light will come from the West to enable men to walk in the right way." Before this latter experience, however, the old priest had died and young Chang had been left in charge of the temple.

Unhappily, with the restraining influences of his old master removed, young Chang had been led astray and had yielded to the temptations of opium-smoking, gambling, and other sins so common among the priests in China. A theatrical company had visited the village and, as is customary in China, though so contrary to strict Buddhist doctrine, they had put up at the temple. These visitors from the outside world introduced the vicious habit of opium-smoking into this little village among the hills where

[1] On the moment of entering that peaceful scene,
The common material body of men
Is exchanged for a body ethereal and bright,
That is seen from afar to be glowing with light.
Happy they who to that joyful region have gone
In numberless *kalpas* their time flows on.
Around are green woods, and above them clear skies,
The sun never scorches, cold winds never rise,
And summer and winter are both unknown
In the land of the Law and the Diamond Throne;
All errors corrected, all mysteries made clear,
Their rest is unbroken by care or by fear.
And the truth that before lay in darkness concealed
Like a gem without fracture or flaw is revealed.—

From the "Poetry of the Pure Land"
—*Chinese Buddhism*, by Rev. Joseph Edkins, D.D., p. 173.

THE TANING VALLEY.

In this quiet spot, shut off from the great world beyond, stands the city of Taning, its walls washed by a mountain stream. Here three English ladies suffered martyrdom for Christ.

To face page 11.

hitherto it had been practically unknown; but despite this sad lapse in morals, Chang's force of character and his superior education were such that at the early age of thirty he was appointed to the office of *seng-kwan*, or Buddhist bishop of the county.

By this office he became responsible to the Government for all the priests in the county—about fifty in number—any cases of crime occurring among them being handed over to him for examination and punishment. In this fact we have an interesting illustration of the Chinese attitude towards a foreign faith which it does not officially approve. In China Buddhism has suffered not a little persecution at various times from the Government, and it is still in the widely read Sacred Edict of the great Emperor Kang-Hsi severely denounced. For reasons of policy, however, a very different attitude is adopted towards Buddhism in Tibet and Mongolia, and a *modus vivendi* has been found in China itself. The position may be inconsistent, but it reveals the triumph of practical politics over the merely academic.

This post of responsibility Chang had not sought, and indeed at first refused, but, as the county magistrate would accept no denial, he was at length compelled to accept the honour. On a certain day, therefore, the official chair was sent by the local mandarin to bring him to the *yaman*, or county court as it may be called, where, upon arrival, he found a large company waiting to welcome him. In a brief speech he was installed by the official, after which the next two days he spent in feasting with his friends in a temple which stands on a hill over

against the city, and from which it is only separated by the mountain stream which skirts the city walls.

In this position as Buddhist bishop Chang was brought into close and constant intercourse with the chief official of the district, who ere long became his personal friend. And with the people he speedily gained popularity, for he did not belong to that mystic and meditative school of Buddhism common in South China which gives its sole attention to contemplation, but having learned something of the art of healing, he devoted his knowledge to aiding the sick and ailing. In this way his fame spread far and wide, and people came very long distances for the healing of their diseases and to beseech him to invoke for them the goodwill of the gods. At this time he was a firm believer in the power of incantations, and after his conversion he frankly confessed that he believed the devil had granted him, as Buddhist priest, the power to work miracles.

II

THE VILLAGE TEMPLE[1]

The religious systems of Northern Buddhism will strike any observer at first sight as a most heterogeneous mixture of foreign, especially Indian, and native elements, embodying the mythological deities of almost any religion that ever existed in Eastern Asia.—ERNEST J. EITEL.

IT was only a village Buddhist temple in which Chang resided and of which he had charge, and therefore varied somewhat from the more imposing structures found in the larger cities. But it is a fair sample of thousands of such buildings located in the numberless villages and smaller towns of China and will repay a brief visit.[2]

Ascending some steps from the main street of the village, we enter the great gate which admits us into the entrance hall — the Hall of the Four Great Kings—in which six colossal images, three on each side, are standing. The first two, which are facing one another, are the Generals Heng and Ho, two ferocious guardians of the premises arrayed in their military attire. These images are sometimes

[1] This chapter is not *essential* to the story and can be omitted by those not interested in Buddhism.

[2] For plan see p. xv.

painted on the temple doors, but in this case they are placed as statues within. The remaining four, two on each side, are the four great kings[1] who govern the four continents of Buddhism. All have Sanscrit names, and should appear in warlike dress, but in the temples the guardian king of the North is frequently dressed in black, and holds in his hand a snake, or some other animal hostile to man; the guardian of the East is robed in white and bears a sword, which, brandished, brings destruction to man; the guardian of the South is in red and holds an umbrella, which can either shade the universe or bring forth thunder and rain; while the guardian of the West is in blue and holds a guitar, which, if played, can call forth fire and tempest. All these images are intended to symbolise the powerful protection given to the faith and to the followers of Buddha, but to the common people they have become objects of dread and terror. They are worshipped by the people, who ascribe to them power to heal diseases and avert calamities occasioned by evil spirits.

Passing on through another set of folding doors we enter what is the main courtyard, graced by two tall and stately trees,[2] one on each side. Before these trees are reached, however, the visitors will see the great metal bell used in the daily worship, covered with various inscriptions, including the

[1] *Sī ta T'ien wang.* In Chinese they are called To-wen, Ch'ï-kwo, Tseng-chang, and Kwang-mu.

[2] Many Buddhist temples have a specimen of the sacred Bodhi tree, under which Shakyamuni sat when he attained to Buddhaship, in front of the temple.

names of the subscribers. Within a building which flanks the left wall of the courtyard will be found *Ti-tsang*, the great god of hell, surrounded by the ten kings of hell, from whose punishments and tortures he seeks to save mankind. So great is the merit ascribed to *Ti-tsang* that he would have become a Buddha had he not vowed to remain in Hades to rescue orphan spirits. He is reputed to sleep 359 days a year and only to awaken on his birthday, but should there be only 29 days in that month, for the months are lunar, he turns over for further sleep. On that fearsome and long-looked-for night candles are burnt on the kerbstone before every door.

On the right side of the courtyard, opposite the hall of *Ti-tsang*, will be found *Kwan-yin*, the goddess of mercy, the Buddhist saviour, surrounded by the eighteen *Lo-han*, or personal disciples of Buddha. Down to the twelfth century the goddess of mercy was represented as a man, but to-day she generally appears as a woman with a child in her arms, the goddess of motherhood, and not uncommonly confused with the Roman Catholic image of the Virgin Mary and Child. She is described as being able to assume any form at pleasure, and sometimes appears with a thousand arms to symbolise her desire to help and save. The eighteen *Lo-han*, sixteen of which were Hindoos with two Chinese more recently added, are depicted as the personal disciples of Buddha, with intelligent and pleasing countenances. This hall represents both knowledge and mercy.

As we approach the farther end of the court, the north end, for the temple entrance faces south,

we pass *Wei-to*,[1] the armed protector of Buddha. He is clad in complete armour, with a golden helmet on his head and a drawn sword, or sceptre-shaped weapon, in his hand called "The Conquering Satan Staff." In some temples he stands within the hall of the Four Great Kings as their captain, and forms a screen across the door leading into the main court, but in the temple we describe he stands guarding another short flight of stairs, which lead to the most sacred part of the building, the upper hall.

As we ascend these steps and reach the covered balcony, or open portico, which extends the full length of the north end of the temple, we find in the central hall not Shakyamuni alone, but a Buddhist trinity. Primitive Buddhism distinguishes a material, visible, and perishable body from an immaterial, invisible, and immortal body, as the constituents of every personality. Subsequently outside influences gave rise to the Buddhist doctrine of a trichotomy with regard to the nature of all Buddhas. The doctrine of a trinity, which is peculiar to Northern Buddhism, seems to have grown gradually out of the well-known formula :

"I go for refuge to the Buddha,
I go for refuge to the Law,
I go for refuge to the Order,"

which has been retained by Southern Buddhism.

Sometimes the trinity is asserted as representing the past, present, and the future, but this is a subject of dispute. The Three Precious Ones who represent Buddha, the Law, and the Priesthood, are regarded by the common people as three different

[1] *Veda*, the Defensor fidei.

divinities, they being ignorant of the esoteric view behind this representation. Every historic Buddha is believed to possess a triple form of existence, one, as he existed or exists on earth; two, as he exists metaphysically in Nirvana or the Western Paradise; and, three, as he exists in reflex in the person of a spiritual son in the world whose duties are to propagate the faith. Thus, in Northern Buddhism, *Shakyamuni*, founder of the present Buddhist church, is known first as *Shakyamuni*, his earthly name; second as *Amitabha*, or Boundless Light (his Paradise of the Western Heavens), which is Buddha's celestial reflex; and thirdly as *Avalokitesvara* (the Sovereign who contemplates the prayers of the world), who is Buddha's spiritual son. This last-named divinity has been apparently confused, or by some "stretch of philological sophistry" identified, with the Chinese native deity *Kwan-yin*, the goddess of mercy. There are other mystic interpretations of the Buddhist trinity which we need not mention here.

In the temple we are describing there are also to be found, in separate rooms to the right and left of this central hall, the god of medicine and the gods who give protection from cattle diseases and locusts.

Passing through a small side-door to the west, we find ourselves in the temple grounds, where the theatrical stage stands,[1] and where the living-rooms of the priests are located. Of these living-rooms we shall have more to say later.

[1] It seems strange to find this in the grounds of a Buddhist temple. It shows how far modifications have been made from early Buddhism.

III

THE SACRED PAGE

Words whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house. —Acts xi. 14.

Though Chang continued to discharge his duties as Buddhist bishop, he never forgot the prophetic injunction of his deceased instructor, and some two months after the sickness referred to in the first chapter, when he heard, as it were, a voice telling him that the true light would come from the West, a copy of the Gospel according to Mark came into his possession.

The story of this Gospel illustrates in a striking manner the words of the promise, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." At some time previously, the date of which it is not now possible to ascertain, a missionary had visited the county city of Taning and stayed in an inn outside the east gate. Among those persons who had purchased Scriptures from him was the priest of the temple over against the city where Chang had been fêted when appointed to his office. The book, however, had not impressed this man; in fact, he regarded it as altogether unintelligible,

and, in consequence, it was soon relegated to a pile of other unused temple literature.

In the course of one of his tours of inspection Chang visited this Taning temple, and when engaged in turning over some of the Buddhist books he lighted "by heavenly chance express" upon the neglected Gospel. He was immediately arrested, for the title "Happy Sound by Ma-k'o" was one he had never seen before. This was not altogether intelligible, but what awakened his keenest interest were the characters *si-li*, "Western chronology," which appeared on the cover in connection with the date of issue. The hope at once flashed through his mind that this book, which evidently had some connection with the West, might enlighten him concerning that other religion of which his master had spoken, and when he learned from the local priest that he had purchased the volume from a foreigner he became greatly excited. Begging leave to be allowed to retain possession of his find, he returned to his own temple as one who had secured some goodly treasure.

The more closely Chang perused the strange little volume the more engrossed and yet the more perplexed he became. The names of unheard-of people and places greatly embarrassed him; in fact, at first he did not even know that these characters stood for names at all. The Chinese, having no alphabet, are unable to reproduce any names or sounds foreign to their own language. The only method possible in such circumstances is to employ Chinese characters which in pronunciation are the nearest equivalent. But these characters, being

idiograms, still retain their original meaning, and this at first leads to no little confusion. Thus *Ma-k'o* in the Gospel which Chang possessed, stood for "Mark," but the character *ma* means a "horse" and *k'o* stands for the verb "to permit." Consequently Chang, instead of reading "The Gospel by Mark," read literally "The Horse permits a Happy Sound." Is it to be wondered at that many a Gospel is cast aside by the casual purchaser as an obscure book, and that even Chang, with all his zeal and interest, was greatly perplexed?

And yet there is no other way in China for transliterating foreign names, since their own characters are the only medium of expression. The English child is still stumbled by such Hebrew words in the Bible as shekel, omar, bath, and such names as Maher-shalah-hash-baz, but the child's path is easy in comparison with the Chinese reader's experience when first he tries to peruse our Scriptures. The pages of the Bible literally bristle with obscurities to the uninstructed Chinese, especially if he should commence with the genealogies in St. Matthew's Gospel.

When he does understand, these genealogies are to him a matter of great interest, valuing as he does all ancestral records.

But though perplexed, Chang was too strongly attracted to the book by its oft-repeated characters for "happiness." Was it not to escape from the sorrows of the world that Buddha had sought Nirvana, but here was a book that abounded in happiness. In this he judged correctly, for it has been pointed out that in the Scriptures the word

"joy" is found twice as often as "sorrow," the word "gladness" fifty times as often as "sadness," while the word "happy" occurs in some twenty-seven passages, whereas the word "unhappy" will be sought for in vain.[1]

For long Chang had sought to find happiness and satisfaction, for the suppression of all desire as taught by Buddhism he had found impossible. Now that he had alighted upon a book which abounded in joy, and where the words of cheer outnumbered the words of sorrow, he was deeply impressed. Difficult as the conquest might be he was determined to prevail, and so he sought out his young friend the village schoolmaster. This youthful man of letters soon perceived that those unintelligible characters when they had a single line printed by their side represented the names of foreign persons, and when they had two parallel lines at the side denoted foreign places, and were therefore to be read according to their pronunciation and not according to their meaning. This discovery made no little difference in the intelligibility of the book, but there was still much that was obscure, and fain would these two students have received enlightenment had there been any one able to instruct them.

On the cover of the Gospel there was a tantalising stamp which bore the address, "Taiyuanfu, Shang-kwan-hsiang," the last three characters being the name of a street in the provincial capital. Many a time these two men longed to visit the capital and make further enquiry about this book and its strange teaching, but that city was not less than

[1] By Hugh Stowell Brown.

seven days' journey away, and such a journey was too expensive an undertaking both in time and money. To these simple hill-folk, accustomed to their secluded life, a visit to the distant capital was equivalent to a north-countryman visiting London in the days of the Tudors.

But ere we make our introduction to Chang's friend, the schoolmaster, with whom his life's work was to become most closely linked, it may be well to leave them poring over their little volume while we seek to learn something of the work which had been accomplished by some of the early pioneers of the Gospel in the province of Shansi.

Prior to the terrible famine of 1877 to 1879, when it is estimated that nearly ten million people in North China died of starvation, very little had been done by Protestant Missions towards the evangelisation of that province. Some extensive journeys, it is true, had been made from time to time, such, for instance, as the long itineration undertaken by Dr. Alexander Williamson, then of the National Bible Society of Scotland, and the Rev. Jonathan Lees of the London Missionary Society, in 1866, when they entered the province from the east, traversed it to the south-west, and passed into the neighbouring province of Shensi. It was not, however, until November 1876, when Messrs. J. J. Turner and F. H. James, at that time connected with the China Inland Mission, entered the province, that settled work was seriously contemplated. Dr. Timothy Richard of the Baptist Missionary Society also arrived in the November of the following year to open work in the capital.

It is, however, to Mr. Wellman, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, that the honour should be given of first attempting a thorough distribution of the Word of God throughout this province. During the three years 1869 to 1871 he made three prolonged visits to Shansi, these visits embracing a period of some eighteen months in all. On these occasions many thousands of Scriptures were sold, sometimes to officials and sometimes to the people, in spite of official opposition. In most of the places visited he was well received, but at Chiehchow in the south the official threatened to beat with one hundred blows any person caught buying a book. At Yoyang the yamen runners offered strenuous opposition, despite which, however, Mr. Wellman remained for several days.

His longest stay at any one place was at a village in the Kiehsiu district, where he resided for more than fifty days, preaching the Gospel and instructing the people, while he waited for more funds and fresh supplies of literature from the coast.

The cities west of the Fen River, where Taning is situated, were visited by him in 1869, but it is hardly possible that the copy of the Gospel which ultimately fell into the hands of Chang the Buddhist priest was one of those sold on that occasion, for the stamp upon the cover with the address at Taiyuanfu points to a later date when a station had been opened.

Messrs. Turner and James, the China Inland Mission pioneers mentioned above, made a temporary base at Taiyuanfu in April 1877, from which centre they travelled extensively. There is no

record of their having reached Taning city, though they journeyed not a little way in that direction. Dr. Timothy Richard reached Taiyuanfu towards the end of November 1877, just two days after Messrs. Turner and James had left, both having been seriously ill with typhus fever. Who the foreigner was who appears to have visited Taning in 1877 or early in 1878 it is not possible to ascertain with certainty, but that this remote region was visited about this time is extremely probable, for in January 1881 Mr. A. G. Parrott, also of the China Inland Mission, found a copy of the New Testament in the possession of a landlord of an inn in the village of Supien, midway between Taning and Yungho. This New Testament in the classical language, which the owner could not understand, had been left there, so he asserted, by a foreigner some four or five years previously, and this roughly corresponds with the time Chang discovered the copy of the Gospel of Mark in the temple at Taning.

As this story tells of the joys of reaping, it may not be out of place to devote a few lines to illustrate some of the difficulties encountered by those who in those early days went forth bearing the precious seed, and this will best be done by a few extracts from the Diary of Mr. Parrott, written during the visit to which we have referred :

The famine had carried off two-thirds of the people of these hills, the towns and villages were partly in ruins, and the terraced hillsides were uncultivated and overgrown with weeds. It was no easy matter to hire a guide and mules for a journey into this stricken district, but at length a man owning two mules agreed

to take our party, consisting of two Chinese and myself, to our destination.

We started from the city of Pingyangfu feeling conscious of carrying with us the Word of Life into a region of the greatest darkness and death, where the Gospel was not known.

Our expectation was to be able to accomplish the journey in less than three weeks and so escape the rainy season. All went well for the first two days, when the two Chinese brethren—one an evangelist and the other a servant—fell out with each other, and so great was the strife between them that I was forced to allow the servant to return.

Rain now began to fall and advance was both slow and difficult. The road became covered with water, the streams grew deeper, and the constant crossing and recrossing made it dangerous for the animals. As the rain increased we began to fear that the rainy season had set in. We stayed a few days in roadside inns and villages along the road hoping for better weather, but the waters increased so rapidly that it was impossible to proceed. The stream had grown both too rapid and too deep for the laden mules to swim in.

On the eleventh day of our journey, as we were too far from home to think of returning, we looked around us for a resting-place for the night. Not far away were a few caves and in them were living three families. After a little persuasion the occupier of one of the caves, a farmer named Chang, allowed us to sleep in a shed where he kept his grain and farming implements. The next morning our guide refused to go any farther along such roads; he thereupon unpacked our goods and returned home with his mules, the rain, the famine-stricken region, and the fear of wolves and robbers, having quite frightened him. Thus was I left weather-

bound in the cave with only one native companion and the prospect of nearly a fortnight's weary wait. For ten days we lived with the Chang family, and were thankful for their kind hospitality, consisting of two meals of maize bread in the twenty-four hours, together with a few vegetables and hot water to drink. Before the famine some twenty families had lived in these caves, all of whom had perished but three.

We had preached in the villages on our way and were encouraged to find that one man in Puhsien showed an interest in the Gospel; he afterwards became a Christian, the first-fruits of the Christian church now existing in this neighbourhood. Our host also professed to believe our message, but there was manifest little inclination to destroy the idols in his cave. The fearful scenes of starvation around him did not appear to have awakened any great concern about the future, but rather the reverse. We left him with some Scriptures which he began forthwith to study.

As soon as the weather improved we took short excursions into the surrounding hills and villages. Few people were to be found, but we discovered the remains of men, women, and children in many of the caves just as they had fallen from hunger. The sights were awful. Now and then while wandering over the silent hills, we would come across a solitary man, and, sitting down by the side of the mountain path, we would talk together of the famine and would then tell him of the salvation of God which we had come to make known to the stricken people.

When the rain ceased we tried to obtain mules and proceed. We carried some copies of the Scriptures over the mountains along a difficult and dangerous mountain-path till we reached a place where the water in the river was not more than a few feet deep, and we crossed

to the town of Wucheng, put up at an inn, and preached the Gospel to the few people left.

After leaving Wucheng Mr. Parrott and his companion had frequently "to wade through water three and four feet deep," and in consequence, after having reached Sichow, the next city to Taning, he abandoned the remainder of his contemplated journey and returned to his station.

IV

FOLLOWING THE GLEAM

The Gospel is theoretical as well as practical, though most of all a power of life. It had an intellectual element from the first. The enquirer needed some intellectual effort even to follow the story of the Saviour's life, or to get some notion of the Trinity in whose name he desired to be baptized.—H. M. GWATKIN.

IT is now necessary for us to return to the village of Mulberry Crag and make the acquaintance of Chang's young friend. Ch'ü Wan-yih, for that was his name, was an intellectual and good-natured youth of a little more than twenty years of age. Although so young he was locally regarded as a distinguished student, for he had already attained to the rank and dignity of a "salaried scholar." In other words, he was a *ling-seng*, or Bachelor of Arts, who, in recognition of his special merits, had secured a financial grant from the public funds. With such a brilliant beginning great things were hoped for from him, and as in China, in a special degree, the honours of one reflect glory on the whole family and clan, he became the centre of great local expectations.

It would hardly have been possible for Chang to

have chosen a more suitable person to consult, for from his early years Ch'ü had been an earnest seeker after the truth. He had not only studied the Confucian classics for his degree but he had read widely in both Buddhist and Taoist literature, and in his quest for light had entered several sects which exhorted men to the practice of virtue. He therefore willingly responded to Chang's request to come and study this strange pamphlet which had fallen into his hands.

Recent events also had played no small part in preparing the hearts of both these men for the task which lay before them. Hundreds and thousands of people had been dying of starvation all around, and the school of suffering through which they were passing had left its mark upon them. Many of their own relatives and friends had perished, and not a few of the priests over whom Chang had jurisdiction had fallen victims to the relentless grip of famine and its accompanying epidemics. And lastly, Chang's own father and mother had succumbed, leaving the old home of his youth without a single occupant.

Though as a priest he was known as one who had forsaken both father and mother for the faith, he was by no means unmoved by these sad family losses. In vain he had importuned the idols, rain had not fallen and heaven had given no response to his cries or the prayers of the people. Either these gods, in which his hope had been, were deaf and powerless, or they were callous beyond conception, and so his faith in the gods of his youth received a rude shock just at the time when God had placed in his possession a portion of the Holy Scriptures.

We may therefore picture these two men, the one in his Buddhist robes and the other in his scholar's gown, distressed and perplexed in mind beyond measure by the unspeakable calamities and sorrows of famine—seated night after night amid the weird and awesome surroundings of the temple, where the gods had turned deaf ears to all their cries, poring, in the dim light of a primitive Chinese lamp, over the pages of the mysterious little book which had come from the West. Hungry and thirsty, their souls fainted within them, and yet they were nearer than they knew to Him Who is the bread and water of life. The more they read the deeper their interest and wonder grew. Life as they knew it was hard and relentless, but here was love such as they had never conceived. Buddha, it was true, had renounced all to help men, but here was One who had died that men might live, and so, evening by evening, ere they began to read, they reverently laid the book upon the table and burnt incense to it.

During this time of feeling after God if haply they might find Him, they joined a vegetarian sect in the hope that this might help to cleanse their hearts and save them from the evil to come. Light, in fact, they sought for in any quarter from which it might be expected to come. One such occasion occurred at the burial ceremony of the father of one of the local Buddhist priests.

Among the two to three hundred guests who were present at this service, some one had brought a copy of a great sheet tract, based on the sayings of Chu Koh-lang, a man who had lived in the

neighbouring province of Shensi some two hundred years before the birth of Christ. Many of this man's sayings or supposed prophecies had been engraven on stones and then buried awaiting their fulfilment, and, as it was commonly reported and believed, many of these prophecies had come true. Chang therefore eagerly searched through this tract for any guidance in his great quest. Among much that he read one saying arrested his attention, for it seemed possibly to be related to his eager expectation and hope that the truth would come from the West. This saying read, "On the head of those who *come* fruit will grow. All who understand this, whether old or young, will obtain peace." The passage was obscure; he did not understand it; but in the hope that he might yet penetrate to its hidden meaning and thus obtain the promised peace, this enigmatical sentence was treasured up in his heart.

Chang and his friend Ch'ü continued diligently studying their copy of the Gospel, and the entrance of the Word began gradually to bring light. It was, however, as yet only twilight, but it was the twilight of the morning which was to shine unto the perfect day, and not, as with some in our more enlightened days, the twilight of the evening tending towards darkness. From the burning of incense to the book they proceeded to the worship of Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles, in addition to the worship of the gods of the temple, but, not satisfied with keeping even this imperfect knowledge to themselves, the missionary spirit awoke within them and they began to tell their friends of the wonderful

book they had found and of its still more wonderful story. Was not Chang, as priest, the spiritual guide of the village, and was not Ch'ü their scholar and teacher? And so a little company of earnest enquirers gathered together under the shadow of the village gods and gave themselves up to the reading and study of the Word so far as they could understand it.

Twelve months or more passed and this daily custom of worship continued until, sometime in 1879, news was received that another foreigner—David Hill this time—was living in the city of Pingyangfu, the prefectural city, some three or four days' journey away. Yet, much as these seekers after truth desired to see and converse with the stranger from afar, circumstances were at that time strongly against them.

The journey across the mountain range which separated their valley from the Pingyangfu plain was at all times an arduous undertaking. There was no road, nothing but a rough and often precipitous mountain track, and now that gaunt famine was stalking through the land, the roads and passes were deserted, save for a few armed and desperate robbers, while the wolves, which abound in that district, were bolder and fiercer from starvation than they had ever been. Had not Ko,[1] their friend, been attacked by wolves when cutting wood for fuel, and, though armed, been compelled to fight until the weapon literally clave to his hand, when he was found and delivered?

[1] This man subsequently became a Christian and has travelled with the writer.

Under such circumstances a journey was unhappily quite out of the question. Moreover, Ch'ü had a wife and mother and an invalid brother to look after, while Chang could not possibly at such a time of tribulation be absent from the temple. And so they missed an interview with that man of God which might, in their case more easily than with Pastor Hsi, have led them into the way of peace. What would not David Hill have dared, had he but known, to meet that little company of seekers after God and instruct them more perfectly in the way everlasting. But though this was not to be, they continued none the less in the daily study of the Gospel.

It was some time after this—the available data does not enable us to say with any precision when—that Chang became the happy possessor of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. He happened to be engaged in assisting in an elaborate funeral ceremony when tidings reached him that a foreigner was passing through the district selling books. Unable, in consequence of his official duties, to go himself, he despatched an assistant. The lad returned in due course with a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, which was most eagerly studied. When Chang came to the well-known words, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," or "peace"—for the Chinese translation employs that word—he accepted this invitation and promise, strange as it may appear to us, as the fulfilment of that ancient Chinese prophecy to which we have already made reference, "On the head of all who *come* fruit will grow. All who

understand this, whether old or young, will obtain *peace*."

On the cover of this Gospel was stamped the name and address of the China Inland Mission premises at Pingyangfu, the name of the street being Ho-kia-küen. When, therefore, at a later date, several of Ch'ü's scholars had to go up to the prefectural city for the examinations, they were bidden to call at the Gospel Hall and obtain more literature. In this way the whole of the New Testament came into the hands of the eager disciples at Mulberry Crag. This was a great advance and afforded them much food for many long hours of study and thought. It is interesting to know that Ch'ü afterwards confessed that the truths which most impressed him in his study of the Scriptures were :

That God was represented as a Father.

That God might be approached by men in prayer.

That there was a Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

One of the passages which deeply affected them was, "Enter ye in by the narrow gate . . . for narrow is the gate and straitened the way that leadeth into life and few there be that find it." Audible prayer does not seem to have been suggested to their minds.[1] They devoted themselves solely to meditation and praying in the spirit. It was from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles

[1] "In the Buddhist literature, prayers with special ends in view, I do not remember ever having seen more than once or twice. There is nothing but praise and invocation in an exceedingly brief form. It is a prayerless and godless religion, if looked at from the Christian point of view."—JOSEPH EDKINS.

of St. Paul, and not from the Gospels, that both men learned that idolatry was displeasing to God. When this knowledge came to them they began to neglect the idols and to worship God the Father and Jesus Christ alone.

For some time it had been growing increasingly clear to Chang that he could not permanently remain in his position as Buddhist priest and bishop. More than one impulse is evident in his decision to resign and face poverty and privation instead of a measure of comfort and official favour. The teaching of the Scriptures was the main factor in compelling him to face this change, but there was another. Though a Buddhist, the teaching of Confucius—that it was a disgrace and calamity for a man to have no posterity—was sufficiently potent to affect him. Owing to deaths which had taken place in other branches of his family, it had devolved upon Chang's father to carry on two inheritances.[1] These two inheritances had, by his father's death, been left with no one to continue the line, and Chang had never happily acquiesced in his father's family being cut off.

It was therefore with keen interest that he learned from the Scriptures that marriage was ordained of God and honourable for all men, even for an apostle, and as he had seen so much of the evils attending the celibacy of the Buddhist priesthood he was not an unwilling convert in this matter. He therefore had a proclamation written and posted up both in the city and his own village, stating his intention of quitting the temple and assuming the responsi-

[1] *Ting liang-ren*, Chang's own phrase.

bilities of married life. Though the city magistrate somewhat strenuously objected to his retirement from office, Chang eventually did so. Discarding his priestly robes he returned to the home of his youth and began to support himself by farming. Being at this time a man of about forty years of age, and there being no single woman of a suitable age for his wife—all girls in that district being married very young—he married a widow with two sons, one of whom he adopted.

Ere long God blessed him with a son of his own, of whom he became very proud. Such an unheard-of thing as the marriage of an erstwhile Buddhist priest, especially of one who had held high office, required considerable courage. It was a step which could hardly fail to stir up opposition and persecution, and so events proved. From that time onward the mandarin of the city, previously his personal friend, became his most bitter enemy.

It is worth while recording that up to this period neither Chang nor Ch'ü had met a foreigner. All their interest in and their knowledge of the Gospel had been gained from the reading of the Scriptures, and it was not until the year 1882, or four years after Chang's discovery of the Gospel according to Mark, that the first tract, entitled *The Gate of the True Doctrine*, came into their possession. The time, however, was drawing near when they would be able to gain fuller information through personal intercourse with Christian teachers.

V

MORE LIGHT

The Lord came not to found a religion, but to be Himself the revelation. Two simple rites excepted, we cannot trace to Him any ceremony of worship. . . . If the Gospel is a revelation of the eternal through facts of time, it cannot be treated simply as one religion among others.—H. M. GWATKIN.

IN the spring of 1883 Ch'ü was obliged to visit the prefectural city of Pingyangfu to attend one of the higher examinations. Pingyangfu is one of the oldest cities of China, tradition stating that the great Emperor Yao, who stands at the very dawn of China's history as a model of wisdom and virtue, once resided there, and, in support of this belief, it may be stated that the temple erected to the honour of Yao still stands not far removed from the site of the city. But little of the ancient splendour of this capital remains to-day, save its magnificent city walls with their bastions and trebly fortified gates. The appalling famine through which the whole province had passed had left its marks upon this ancient city. Yet it was a great thing, none the less, for any scholar from the hill country to visit this centre.

On this occasion the three days' journey across

the intervening mountains was undertaken with a keener expectation than usual, for not only was there the excitement of the examinations to face; there was the altogether unique experience of meeting for the first time one of the much-talked-of strangers from afar. Guided by the address stamped upon some of the books he had received, Ch'ü easily found his way to the Mission compound. Here, as a scholar, he studied with some curiosity the scrolls or mottoes pasted upon the doorposts of the house in regular Chinese fashion, the scrolls on this occasion bearing sayings differing from any in common use by the people. Then, turning to a Chinese standing near, Chang Chih-heng by name, who seemed to be connected with the establishment, he asked if the foreign teacher was at home. Being answered in the affirmative, he explained his desire for an introduction, if that honourable visitor from distant lands would see him. This request was, of course, gladly responded to, and, with customary Chinese courtesy, he was ushered into the presence of Mr. Samuel B. Drake, who was then one of the China Inland Mission pioneers in the province.

It is comparatively easy to imagine the introductory stages of the conversation which followed, when host and guest would each employ the time-honoured phrases which almost invariably preface the more serious debate. Each would ask with due dignity and reverence the honoured name and country, the exalted age and worthy offspring of the other party, and the answers would be given in each case with becoming words of self-depreciation. The real reason for the visit would be withheld and

only introduced at length as though it were a matter of comparatively little moment. Ch'ü, however, was extraordinarily unconventional for a Chinese scholar, and it is possible he may have made a more direct approach to the subject which burdened his heart.

It is not easy to determine which of the two would be the more delighted, as, without unbecoming haste, the real object of the interview was disclosed; whether the missionary as he discovered the eagerness and intelligence of this enquirer, or whether the earnest enquirer as he found welcome light shed upon some of those questions which had perplexed him for years. There was so much to be said and so much to be learned on both sides that the most lengthy conversation would prove all too short. Mr. Drake therefore gladly invited the scholar and convert to become his guest for a few days, and to this request Ch'ü most cordially responded so soon as his examinations permitted.

The eight days spent by Ch'ü in the Mission Compound were to this seeker after truth something akin to what the stay in the Interpreter's house was to Bunyan's Pilgrim. Here "excellent things" were shown to him to help him on his heavenward way. But the missionary was not the only one to entertain him. Happily there were some of his own fellow-countrymen present who had been in Christ before him. There was Chang Chih-heng, who met him at the gate, and Sung, who later became the pastor of the Pingyangfu Church, but, perhaps best of all, there was the well-known scholar Hsi, the convert of David Hill, who subsequently became the famous pastor. In him Ch'ü found one well

able to enter into his intellectual difficulties and to instruct him sympathetically. What all this meant to a Chinese scholar forty years ago cannot easily be exaggerated.

Those days in the Mission Compound were red-letter days indeed, for it was then that Ch'ü definitely and intelligently determined to break with his old life and throw in his lot with the followers of the despised Nazarene. Not only did he gain a clearer insight into the meaning of God's Word, but he learned more fully what prayer meant as he was led by Mr. Hsi, his fellow-scholar, to the Throne of Grace. But all too soon the brief visit was over. Though naturally reluctant to say farewell, he was eager to communicate all that he had learned to those awaiting his return in his native place, so with mingled feelings he set forth again across the hills to his secluded home. His departure was brightened by a present of thirteen new books which Mr. Drake gave him, and also by a pressing invitation to come again in the autumn.

Of the impression which Ch'ü made at this time upon the little company at Pingyangfu, Mr. Drake wrote home as follows :

" His manner immediately on acquaintance produced a pleasing and assuring effect. There was evident frankness and humility of mind, while there was no suspicion of obsequiousness. His simple naturalness at once made me feel that I could trust him with perfect security. These traits of character were the more marked because of their rarity among the Chinese."

VI

RESOLUTE DISCIPLES

Christian belief was much easier to settle than Christian conduct. . . . Offence was everywhere, and could not always be avoided without complicity in heathen worship or immorality. —H. M. GWATKIN.

CH'Ü'S return to his native place was looked forward to by his neighbours and friends with much curiosity and speculation, for innumerable rumours, not always complimentary, were current even among those remote hills about the foreigner and his ways. Were they not the barbarians who had introduced opium—or "the foreign smoke," as it was commonly called—into China, and had they not on more than one occasion dared to fight against their Emperor and great country? And so when Ch'ü arrived and related his experiences, speaking in warm terms of the kindness and hospitality received at the hands of the foreigner, and stating that he had determined to join himself to the Jesus religion, local opinion was strongly divided.

To the majority of his fellow-countrymen, prejudiced by immemorial usage against any departure from their conservative ways, he appeared as a misguided fanatic who had evidently been

bewitched. From this time, therefore, he began to be looked upon with a measure of suspicion and incipient opposition. In consequence, Ch'ü did not find the way of faith either easy or smooth, but, nothing daunted, he studied more carefully the books he had received and discoursed more ardently with his friends on the things he had heard and seen. In Chang, the ex-priest, he naturally found a kindred spirit, and these two, with a few others, were, by the very criticism they encountered, knit the more closely the one to the other.

In the following autumn, in response to the invitation Mr. Drake had given, Chang and Ch'ü, with Ch'ü's brother and one other friend, set forth for Pingyangfu. Upon arrival they were not a little disappointed to find that the missionary was absent on a visit to the capital of the province in the north. Sung, who was in charge at the Mission House at the time, gladly welcomed them, and did all that was in his power to make their visit profitable, but after a stay of ten days, as the missionary had not returned, they decided they could wait no longer. But barely had they set forth upon their return journey when Mr. Drake arrived, and though he immediately despatched a messenger on horseback to bring them back, this man either failed to overtake them or pursued a different road.

That no effort should be spared to assist these eager enquirers, Mr. Drake despatched Chang Chih-heng and another Christian, named Li, to proceed as far as Mulberry Crag and invite them to come once more. Although the journey was a

considerable one and the cold of winter was setting in, they decided to go. Ch'ü's younger brother, unfortunately, was too indisposed to accompany them this time, but they were joined by two other friends, one of whom eventually became a believer.

Upon this occasion Ch'ü, after his arrival at the Mission Station, made a definite application to be baptized. He was, however, grievously disappointed to learn that the Church had made it a rule that all candidates for baptism should be kept on probation for twelve months before being admitted to Church membership. It was true that he had passed through a more severe period of probation than the majority of those who had been received into the Church, but the rule, as a rule, was a good one, although in this particular instance it pressed rather hardly upon the applicant. He was therefore kindly and sympathetically told to come once again next spring, when, if he continued faithful in his purpose, he would gladly be received. Little did he or those who told him of this Church regulation imagine how severely his faith was to be tested ere the following spring arrived.

As for Chang, though, as he subsequently related, his mind had been made up to enter the Church before he set out upon this journey, there was a legitimate reason for delay. He was still a heavy opium smoker, smoking at this time as much as twelve ounces of the drug in a month.[1] The rules of the Church were entirely against the admission of any one addicted to this vicious habit, and

[1] Twelve Chinese ounces are nearly equivalent to one pound avoirdupois.

rightly so, for it was an offence even against the moral standards of the unbeliever. Chang, however, was determined to bring his life into accordance with his faith, and resolved to break with this evil. Therefore, before he left the city, he purchased from Chang Chih-heng a box containing a hundred pills of opium medicine for the sum of one thousand cash. He was warned that he was trying to do an impossible thing, for with so serious a craving as his was, one box of pills would never suffice.

Another subject which exercised Chang's mind at this time was prayer. At the Mission Station he had not only heard the missionary and the Christians engaging in prayer, but had been repeatedly told that prayer was the great cure for weakness. Yet he failed to understand how this exercise could deal with such shortcomings, and though he listened intently to those who prayed, he felt himself unable to do the same. He thought that if he was determined to enter the Church that surely should suffice.

It was not until he got back to his native village, and happened, in the course of his reading, upon the passage, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak," that he became seriously exercised about this duty. In this connection he noted Christ's words of warning to Peter, and Peter's confident reply to Christ, "Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." He was convinced that Peter honestly meant what he said, and consequently recognised that he had failed through his own

inherent weakness. He therefore determined to give himself to prayer, and though at first, as he relates, his whole body broke out into a profuse perspiration when making the effort, he felt it better even to make some mistakes rather than not to pray at all.

And it was well for Chang and Ch'ü that they did learn to pray, for they were indeed to enter into temptation. Ch'ü had already been tried by the illness of his brother, but now his only child fell sick and died. This was verily a severe test of faith to one who, as a young convert, had had practically no experience of God's dealings with His children. He did not then understand the meaning of the words, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." "I was much depressed," he subsequently testified, "and the devil tempted me to believe that I had been deluded."

Shortly after this his brother also died, but in this case there was present another and an entirely new element. This brother, although he had never been baptized or received into any visible Church, was greatly helped while lying on his death-bed, and constantly exclaimed with joy, "Thank God, thank God, Jesus is able to save." For the first time these men saw death, that last great enemy so feared by those brought up in heathen darkness, robbed of its terrors. To those who through life have been under bondage to the fear of the great unknown, this was an almost undreamt-of miracle.

It was soon after this that the Inspector of Education heard that the young graduate Ch'ü had

not only put away his idols, but that he had actually confessed himself a follower of the Western Sage, for as such Jesus Christ is designated in that great Imperial Dictionary which bears the name of the famous Emperor Kang-Hsi.[1] He immediately made definite enquiries as to the truth of these charges. When he learned that the report was correct and that Ch'ü was actually engaged in teaching others this new Way, he summoned Ch'ü to appear before him, when he publicly interrogated him as to whether he conformed to the customs and practices honoured by his ancestors or not. When Ch'ü replied in the negative and tried to explain the reason for his departure from the time-honoured beliefs of China, the Inspector, too impatient to listen, had him beaten on the hand (no scholar is subjected to the indignity of the common bastinado), and threatened that he should be deprived of his degree unless he recanted.

The threat of being thus degraded in the sight of his fellow-countrymen was no ordinary trial to a Chinese scholar. But Ch'ü's faith was sufficiently established for him to resist the temptation to deny his Lord. Concerning this threat, he subsequently said, "I counted my degree as nothing in comparison with the excellency of Christ Jesus my Lord, for Jesus has greater glory in store for me than any earthly degree." It is quite possible that the

[1] The second Emperor of the Manchu dynasty and one of the most remarkable men of history. Literature was a passion with him, and, until he was brought into conflict with the Pope through the quarrels of the Jesuits and Dominicans, he was friendly towards Roman Catholicism.

experience of Mr. Hsi, subsequently the well-known pastor, may have helped Ch'ü at this time, for Hsi, in the early part of the same year, had been actually deprived of his academic honours. It is hardly possible that so great a public disgrace as this should have remained long unknown to another scholar in the same prefecture.

Within two or three weeks of this trying ordeal Ch'ü, accompanied by one of his companions, set forth once more for Pingyangfu, this time to attend the Spring Conference of the Church. Here he found fully one hundred persons met together, twenty-six of whom were already Church members, while the remainder were either candidates for baptism or interested enquirers. It was a great encouragement to Ch'ü to meet with so many who were moved by the same impulse as himself, and the occasion was for him and his companion a memorable one, for they were among the eighteen persons—thirteen men and five women—who were then admitted to the privileges of Church membership by baptism.

Throughout this period Chang had been fighting a stern battle with his opium craving. Although he had been carefully instructed as to the number of pills he should take daily, he was no exception to the many who argue that if three pills a day could cure a man in three weeks, then nine pills a day would cure him in one week, and why not? Such logic seemed as convincing as any mathematical statement could be. But as medicine is not always governed by the laws of logic, the practical consequence of such theorising was that Chang became

very ill, so that he could neither eat nor sleep. His faith in the pills was in this way rudely shaken, and they were therefore discarded.

But Chang was determined none the less to fight this battle through, so instead of relying upon the use of the medicine, he determined to pray for deliverance. For the first ten days he suffered acutely. At times the agony became simply unbearable, and then he would take a small quantity of opium, mix it with sugar, and swallow it. In this way he tided himself over the early part of his struggle, but total abstinence from these smaller doses which had alleviated his pain was not attained as easily as might be supposed. It was a hard and a long fight, and he continued to suffer more or less for several months, but faith in God and strength of will ultimately brought him through triumphantly.

Knowing that he would constantly see the opium pipe and lamp in use in the homes of the people, and that he would be frequently invited to smoke, he resolved not to destroy his own pipe and other paraphernalia, so that he might habituate himself to the sight of these utensils, and thus the more readily resist the pressure of his friends. This may appear a somewhat strange procedure, but he subsequently testified that God took away entirely even the desire for the drug.

When Chang had thoroughly recovered from the effects of this struggle, he set forth with Ch'ü for Pingyangfu, since he now saw no reason why he should not be admitted to Church membership. For some reason this journey was not to be so easily accomplished as it had previously been. Ere they

had travelled half-way Chang's feet began to swell, so that he found it almost impossible to walk. Ch'ü, who was a younger and more vigorous man, repeatedly urged him to desist and return home, but Chang, recalling the passage, "If thy hand or thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt rather than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the eternal fire," determined to persist. Go back, therefore, he would not. One of the last hymns they had sung before setting out on this journey had given expression to the truth that now is the day of salvation, and that there was danger and death in delay. The pain he suffered he therefore regarded as of the devil, and this only made him the more determined to press forward. Subsequently, when relating his experiences on this journey he stated that he had found it more painful to go downhill than up, and in consequence at some of the steepest places he would sit down and slide. To help him Ch'ü bought a stick to lean on, and also carried his bedding and luggage as well as his own. For two days the journey was pursued under these slow and painful conditions, until the Pingyangfu plain was reached, when progress became more easy. This journey alone proved the sincerity of the man, and he was, to his great joy and thankfulness, baptized and welcomed into the Church. Ch'ü also was appointed an Elder of the growing cause west of the Fen River. This was sometime late in the autumn or early winter of 1884.

With Ch'ü officially appointed as Elder, the

Church in his home at Mulberry Crag became more closely knit to the central station at Pingyangfu. Ch'ü's home consisted of some stone-faced cave-dwellings built on three sides of an open quadrangle measuring roughly fifteen yards square. The fourth side of this court was shut in by a boundary wall, in which was built the entrance door.

Before the famine Mulberry Crag had boasted a population of some seventy families, but at the time of our story it had been reduced to only twenty-three homes. But from among these, those whose hearts the Lord had opened, together with a few enquirers from the surrounding villages, gathered together Sunday by Sunday to worship the only true God, and to be instructed more fully in their newly found faith.

VII

SOME FIRST-FRUITS

The living power might reach them in the reasoning of friends, in the reading of Christian books, or in the sight of Christian purity and courage. Justin and Cyprian illustrate the first way, Tatian and Dionysius of Alexandria the second, and we may pretty safely set down Tertullian for the third, while the conversion of Arnobius is ascribed to a dream.—H. M. GWATKIN.

LET us pay a brief visit to the little church in the house of Elder Ch'ü, and seek an introduction to one or two of the early converts. This will not be without interest, and we may in this way learn something of the manner in which not a few of the Christians in China in years past were and still are being brought into the light.

Two of these early converts were a Mr. and Mrs. Yang. Yang Sih-yong, for that was the man's full name, had been an impoverished farmer specially addicted to the twin curses of opium-smoking and gambling. Rather than relate his story ourselves, we will request him to give this to us in his own way[1]:

"My wife had been stricken down with a strange and serious illness, from which there appeared to

[1] This story was taken down from his own lips by Miss Giles.

be no hope of recovery. In my trouble I heard of a doctor who was possessed by a spirit of divination, and was reputed to be able to cure all manner of diseases. I therefore applied to him for help. After using his various arts, he told me that the verdict was that my wife would live, but there was, however, one thing which I must do, and that was, I must kneel in the open courtyard of my home and pray to the Spirit of Heaven. 'Pray to the Spirit of Heaven indeed,' thought I, 'how can I? A wicked man such as I am, an opium-smoker and gambler, can do no such thing.' Moreover, I did not know how to pray.

"When I returned home my wife naturally asked me what the diviner had said, and I, since I could not pray, sorrowfully told her that his opinion was that she would not recover. Then a very unusual thing happened. The door suddenly opened, and in walked an old woman, a neighbour of ours, who was over seventy years of age. She asked how my wife was, and I replied by telling her what the diviner had said. The old lady, however, responded by saying, 'But ten to one she is going to live.' These words were subsequently reported to the diviner, when he commended the old lady, saying that her statement was true.

"So keen was I that my wife should get better that I vowed in my heart that if she recovered I would never again smoke opium or gamble, and that I would be a more industrious farmer than hitherto. My wife's health did improve, but in less than a year the old symptoms reappeared, whereupon I called in another doctor. But this man, for some

reason, refused to come, and said to me, 'You cannot do better than go and see Chang and Ch'ü. They will be able to help you.'

"Without delay I set off to find these men, and as it happened to be worship day (Sunday), when I entered the room where they were I was amazed to see two men kneeling on the ground apparently doing nothing. For the life of me I could not make out what they were engaged in, for there were no gods or images present. As they continued kneeling on the ground and took no notice of me I thought it must be because I was a poor man, but when they rose from their knees they politely asked me to take a seat and then enquired as to the reason for my visit. When I told them my trouble Mr. Chang urged me to repent of my sins, to abandon idolatry and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. I assured them that I was quite willing to do these things, but that as I had no money to give them they probably did not want me as a convert. On this score, however, they both comforted me, saying that they had no desire for my money. When I was assured on this point I invited them to come with me to my home to help me destroy my idols and to pray for my sick wife and brother.

"Without further ado we set off together, and when my home was reached the idols were taken down and forthwith destroyed. They then prayed for me and especially for my sick ones. My newly found teachers also taught me a short prayer and urged me to pray continually. In less than a month both my wife and brother were restored to health,

and we thereupon determined that we would put our trust in Jesus Christ who had done so much for us. From that time we became subject to persecution, and our great joy in consequence was to look forward to the Sundays when we had fellowship with other believers. As a lad I had had two years of schooling, and was able to read a little. I therefore began to read with deep interest the Scriptures, and as we came to understand their message we realised as never before how evil and sinful our past had been, and we earnestly longed for a new life. My brother also joined us and became a believer. Both he and I were at this time heavily in debt, in consequence of our past manner of life, but we now resolved to pay off these our obligations as soon as possible. To enable us to do this we rented our own land to other people and went out to earn money by labouring for others."

It would be interesting to follow the future steps of Yang and his wife, but that would take us too far away from the main current of our story. It must suffice to say that when early in 1886 the Rev. W. W. Cassels, now Bishop in Western China, went as the first missionary to reside in Taning, Yang accompanied him as his servant, his wife subsequently joining him at this station. Mrs. Yang soon taught herself to read, and became an earnest and useful helper. For seven years they remained at Taning, subsequently labouring for another seven years in the neighbouring city and station of Sichow. With others they suffered during the Boxer persecutions, but remained loyal throughout that testing period. Mr. Yang has been a most faithful evan-

gelist and leader, and he still continues to exercise a remarkable ministry in prayer. Mrs. Yang also developed into an intelligent and helpful co-worker among the women and girls, but she died several years ago.

Another of the early converts was old Mrs. Ch'ü, the mother of the schoolmaster. She became an earnest and sincere Christian and was beloved by all who knew her. For many years she proved herself a true mother in Israel, extending a hearty and generous hospitality towards all who loved the Lord Jesus. One of the early missionaries who came to know her intimately wrote of her as "One of the nicest and truest gentlewomen in China, with a face literally lit up with the light of Heaven. It is a heavenly satisfaction to see what the grace of God can do in the hearts of those who have only known Him for a short time."

Unhappily, Ch'ü the scholar was not as blessed in his wife as he had been in his mother, for she gave small heed to those things which now most deeply concerned him. For a long time she hardened her heart both against the message of life and against those who professed to believe the Gospel. Her attitude in this matter was mainly because of the persecutions which her husband suffered and which therefore directly affected her.

Other converts of those early days were a Mr. Liu, a Mr. Ts'ao of Fen-li, a village some two miles away, and Ch'ü's younger brother of whom we have already spoken. There was also Feng Yu-tai, but as part of his life-story will have to be told in the following chapter we will not more fully enter into

it here. These were a few of those who in the earliest days gathered around Chang and Ch'ü, and became the first-fruits of that goodly harvest, both in this and other centres, which has gladdened the hearts of not a few.

VIII

PERSECUTION

Our Sect shall never die. The more it is smitten the more it grows, for every one who is moved by our patience to enquiry straightway becomes our follower.—TERTULLIAN.

NOT long after regular worship had been established in Ch'ü's home the whole work passed through a time of fierce opposition and serious persecution. Two or three miles to the west of the village of Mulberry Crag lived the farmer Feng mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter. When he put away his idols he notified the village elders that he could no longer conscientiously pay that portion of his taxes which was levied for idolatrous purposes.

This form of passive resistance to idolatry has at all times given rise to trouble in many parts of China. As the prosperity of the whole community is, in the eyes of the people, dependent upon the goodwill of the gods, such action is looked upon as inimical to the welfare of the whole village or district, and is therefore keenly resented. Sometimes the village elders retaliate by cutting off the apostate's water supply or by withholding legal redress in case of wrong, so that the young convert to Christianity

practically becomes an outlaw and may be robbed or maltreated with impunity.

In the case of farmer Feng the opposition assumed a more aggressive note. The villagers surrounded his house, seized him, and dragged him to the village temple, where he was bound and publicly beaten. Hearing of this, Chang and Yang, who had previously endeavoured to secure a peaceable settlement of this vexed question, went in person to comfort their friend in his affliction. Being enabled to secure his temporary release, they brought him back to the village at Mulberry Crag. But his fellow-villagers were not prepared to let the matter rest there. The fact that so influential a man as Chang should not only renounce his former faith and desert the temple, but that he should engage in actively encouraging others to follow in his steps, to their minds seriously aggravated the whole question. They argued that unless the matter were dealt with speedily and in a drastic manner there was no knowing who might not endeavour to escape paying his taxes. As Feng persisted in his attitude of resistance to their demands, they proceeded to accuse him before the county magistrate, who issued an order for his arrest on the ground of refusing to pay his taxes.

When Chang heard that an order for the arrest of Feng had been issued, he was on his way to visit the home of one of the converts who had a sick child. Realising the urgency of the situation he immediately set off for another village named Chong-oh where some theatricals were in progress, as he expected to be able to pick up some additional information there. Upon reaching this village he

found the yamen-runners had already arrived, and, judging that they would probably delay for refreshments and for opium-smoking purposes, as well as to have a look at the theatricals, he hastily despatched, by a short cut, a lad who lived next door to Ch'ü, requesting him to give his friend Feng a warning of what was intended. The consequence was that when the official runners did reach Feng's village the man they sought was nowhere to be found. Though defeated in their search, they learned from the villagers that a lad from Mulberry Crag—Chang I-chow by name—had been seen to enter the village not long before and that Feng had hurriedly departed in his company.

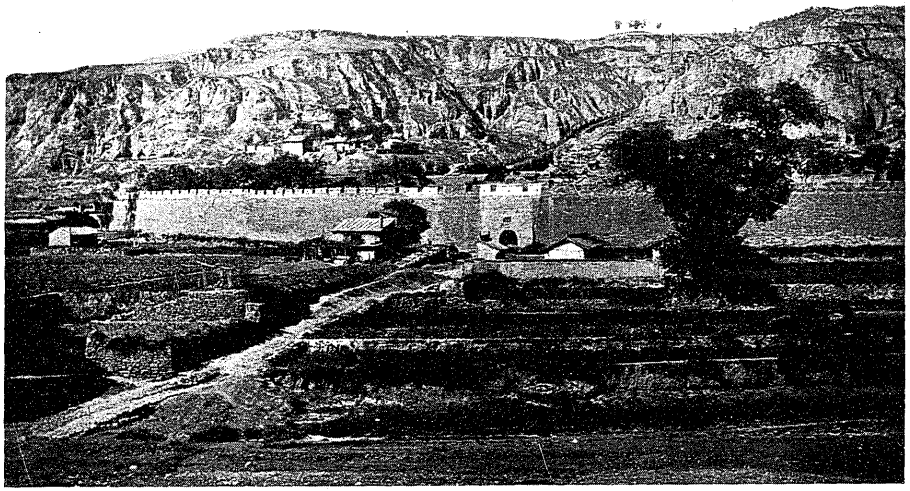
Being unable to ascertain Feng's whereabouts, the matter was reported to the official, who ordered the arrest of the lad on the serious charge of having aided and abetted a man in escaping the hand of the law. Meanwhile Feng, with Ch'ü, in whose home he had spent the night, set off before daylight for Pingyangfu, travelling by small and unfrequented paths so as to escape detection. As for the yamen-runners, they returned to Mulberry Crag, and when about to drag off the terrified lad, Chang, the ex-priest, intervened. He frankly confessed that it was he who had engaged the boy to be his messenger, and that if any one was to blame it was he. As he expressed his willingness to accompany the runners back to the city in place of the lad they at length agreed, although they demurred to his request that the lad should be set at liberty since that would have been contrary to their instructions.

When the Taning official was notified that the

ex-Buddhist priest had surrendered in place of the lad, he was considerably perplexed as to what his course of action should be. Chang was still a man of some standing in the neighbourhood in consequence of his past record, and, furthermore, he had been his personal friend. He therefore ordered that the ex-priest should be allowed to depart, for, after all, the real subject of dispute concerned the farmer Feng who had refused to pay his taxes. It was evident that the official was anxious to avoid being involved in a dispute with his old friend, and it is not improbable that the matter would have ended here so far as Chang was concerned had not the gentry of the city taken the matter up.

When Chang knew that he was free he decided to visit a friend in the city, for it was then too dark for him to reach his home that night. The same evening, however, the scholars and headmen of the city met together and determined to proceed, without delay, as a deputation to the official and protest against the release of Chang. Both Chang and Ch'ü, they asserted, were dangerous men, and if Chang was allowed in this way to flout the authorities, the whole of the district, which was not a little influenced by him, would soon follow in his pernicious ways, as not a few people had already done. They urged that Chang should be brought to book without delay, and that he should not be allowed to escape punishment.

News of what was on foot was speedily brought to the ears of Chang, and, as he surmised that any charge might be trumped up against him which would justify official action, he immediately paid



THE CITY OF TANING.

One of China's small mountain cities. The city wall can be seen, on the right of the picture, running up the hillside. This is the centre of government for the country district.

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his taxes, which were then due, and secured the official receipt. In this surmise Chang was quite correct, for the tax collector was subsequently actually reproved for having accepted the money from, and given an official receipt to, a man under suspicion. Non-payment of taxes would have been an all-sufficient excuse should any complaint have reached the ears of the higher authorities.

In consequence of the strong line taken by the scholars and gentry of the city, Chang was ordered to appear before the local magistrate and compelled to kneel at the foot of the steps in the judgment hall. This was the first time these two former friends had met since Chang had resigned his office as Buddhist bishop. In the trial which followed Chang, who was no weakling, so ably defended himself that once or twice the official was worsted in the legal argument. For instance, the official professed that he had only wanted the lad about his family taxes, but that, replied Chang, was not on the warrant for his arrest. This, however, only served to anger the official, and, as not infrequently happens, on the principle that "a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and such contentions are like the bars of a castle," he flew into an unrestrained passion and ordered his lictors to beat Chang with the heavy bamboo.

Chang, whom grace and years subsequently mellowed into a peculiarly gentle and loving personality, was at this time a high-spirited man, still conscious of the dignity that had pertained to his former office. He therefore refused to submit to such a humiliation and demanded justice. Though

he was not a Confucian scholar he had a right as an official, and was really the equal to a man of letters. But the official was implacable, and resistance only enraged him the more, so that he ordered the lictors to seize him and beat him two hundred blows. Protest was useless, for he was seized, thrown down, and held by seven or eight men. Chang resolved, however, that no cry for mercy should escape from his lips, and he bore this cruel punishment and its accompanying base humiliation in silence. But the official, bent upon breaking the stubborn will of his prisoner, gave the reins to his passion and ordered him to be beaten another hundred blows, threatening the lictors with punishment themselves if they did not strike more heavily. Ere this cruel sentence was fulfilled Chang swooned away, and in his unconscious and blood-bespattered condition was dragged into the open courtyard.

Chang was now cast into a foul cell, where he was chained to the *kang* or brick bed. So damp and rife with filth and vermin was this place, that no relief from his sufferings could be found even in sleep. Fearing that he might possibly take his life and thus bring the official into trouble—a not uncommon expedient in China—he was searched by the underlings, and after the first two days of almost unbearable torture he was freed from his chains and granted a greater amount of liberty. The total length of his confinement extended to forty days and thirty-nine nights.

The effects of the cruel treatment received at this time Chang carried to the end of his days. In after years, when he became the pastor of the

church in the very city in which he had suffered, he always evinced the most sympathetic and tender-hearted spirit towards any Christian who was persecuted or who might be called upon to suffer as he had. His one weakness, in fact, as a pastor, was possibly his keen anxiety to shield the converts from all persecution and hardship.

We are, however, anticipating our story. While Chang was in prison, the scholar Ch'ü and the farmer Feng had reached Pingyangfu, hoping to secure the friendly intervention of the missionary, for did not the treaties with foreign powers secure liberty for converts to join the Christian Church? To their bitter disappointment, however, they found that the missionary was away, having gone north to Taiyuanfu, the capital of the province. As news, however, reached them of the serious sufferings of their friend Chang, they realised the urgency of the circumstances and set off again on the six days' journey along the great north road to the capital.

At Taiyuanfu Mr. Drake listened with deep sympathy to their story, realising at the same time, as not a few missionaries have, the difficulty and delicacy of his position. To go in person and protest to the official was his first and natural impulse, but for a foreigner to interpose between a Chinese official and a Chinese subject is an action ever open to many ob ections. He therefore wrote a letter to his trusted helper Fan, whom he had left at Pingyangfu, suggesting that he should go and make friendly representations to the official at Sichow, which city, being a *chow*, had jurisdiction over Taning, which was only a *hsien*.

It was already dusk when this letter was ready, but Ch'ü and his companion set off on their return journey without waiting for a night's rest, travelling by long and weary stages.

Ch'ü subsequently described something of the conflict of soul through which he passed during this journey south. He was disappointed that the foreign pastor had not come himself, and wondered and wondered how the matter would end. If Chang should die he feared he would then be left alone to bear the burden of the work and the brunt of any persecution. If only money would avail to appease the official, how gladly would he sell all his land to obtain his friend's release. Ten thousand thoughts chased themselves through his mind like so many threads in a loom, but he saw no pattern and no way out of the tangle into which they had been drawn.

Too anxious to eat and almost too weary to sleep, he dozed one night and dreamed that in the sky he saw three suns, each of equal brilliancy and glory. To him this dream had a message of comfort, for did it not signify the Trinity, God the Three in One, who was in Heaven shining even upon this dark and perplexing experience? All, therefore, must be well.

Comforted with this dream he went forward to Pingyangfu. Fan, when he had received Mr. Drake's letter, accompanied Ch'ü and his friend across the hills to Sichow, where happily the official proved to be a remarkably friendly man. The representations made were not in vain, and, in consequence, Chang was set at liberty after his forty days' confinement.

IX

CHRIST OR CONFUCIUS?

Public life was everywhere fenced with worship of the gods. The Senate began its debates with a libation on the altar of Victory, the general took the auspices before a battle, and the soldier swore his oath of loyalty before the gods.—H. M. Gwatkin.

It was not long ere Ch'ü, who had been on his mission of mercy to the capital for his friends Chang and Feng, was also called upon to suffer for the Gospel. Being a Confucian scholar, and, moreover, a salaried graduate, he was expected to take part in the regular half-yearly sacrifices to, and worship of, Confucius, as well as to be present on other state occasions.

It is hardly possible for a Westerner to realise the place Confucius has taken in the lives and esteem of the Chinese people. So great is their respect and veneration for literature, that it is considered an act of merit to rescue a piece of printed paper from the footpath and burn it in a shrine, lest it should be trampled under foot or put to any derogatory use. How much more worthy of honour, therefore, must that man be who is looked upon by them as the father of literature. Twice a month, at the new and full moon, every

schoolboy is compelled to prostrate himself before the tablet of Confucius, he being taught to believe that his success as a scholar depends upon this worshipping of the Great Sage.

But more than this. Twice a year, for approximately the last two thousand years, Confucius has been worshipped in the spring and autumn by the Emperor in Peking and by the officials and *literati* throughout the whole of China. In every city, even those of the lowest rank, would be found a temple of literature, where Confucius is represented either by a wooden tablet bearing his name and titles, or, in more rare cases, by an image. This great bi-yearly sacrifice takes place in the fifth watch of the night, when one ox, twenty-two sheep, and twenty-two pigs are slain. In the capital cities the ceremonies are on a large scale, the Governor-General, with thousands of attendant mandarins and scholars, taking part. What with the chanting and the music, with the flag-bearers and dancers bending their bodies to right and left, with the pouring out of the libations and the richly clad company in the artificially lighted grounds, the occasion is one of no little magnificence.

Let the reader picture to himself the gloom of a huge Chinese temple, lit with many-coloured Chinese lanterns, in those early hours of the morning long before dawn. Let him imagine the unpleasant carcases of victims laid upon the altars before the tablet of the Great Sage and his canonised disciples, whilst all around stand a great concourse of officials, civil and military, watching a slow-time dance, something after the fashion of our minuets, per-

formed by fifty youths, while several bands, each of six players, discourse shrill music, the airs of which and the instruments employed all being similar to those with which Confucius was familiar. All the while the singers and dancers sing and posture as the words, "Great is Confucius, philosopher, the primal seer, the primal sage" are slowly chanted. Symbolic offerings will be seen standing upon the tables between the incense vase flanked by two candles upon the altar, and a roll of spotless white silk spread out upon the floor ready for burning after the departure of the spirit.

While this is proceeding, half a dozen high officials, clad in their gorgeous robes, will be seen standing in the courtyard below the steps under the open sky, now prostrating themselves with foreheads to the ground, now, at each offering, marching up the side steps to the hall, there again prostrating themselves, then back again to the courtyard below. At length at dawn the high priest arrives, having, if he has obeyed the recognised ritual, fasted for the three preceding days, and slowly the ceremonies proceed to their close, when a great chorus is sung :

> Confucius, Confucius ! how great is Confucius,
> Before Confucius there never was a Confucius,
> Since Confucius there never has been a Confucius,
> Confucius, Confucius ! how great is Confucius.

"It is an impressive and a curious sight," writes one who has witnessed it, "leaving one with a feeling in the weirdness of the dark night as of one

suddenly transported back through thousands of years of time to an age which is long past."[1]

Now the scholar Ch'ü cannot have been unaware that sooner or later he would be called upon to face a great ordeal. His friend Chang had early recognised that idolatry was incompatible with faith in Jesus Christ, and had, in consequence, resigned his office and forsaken the Buddhist temple. But the tenets of Confucius stand in a somewhat different category from Buddhism, for they are not so much religious as ethical, and are in the main in harmony with the Ten Commandments. But if the early Christians found that they had to break with what the Apostle Paul called "the weak and beggarly rudiments" of the old dispensation, how much more must the converted Confucian scholar recognise the necessity of severing himself from any trust in the legal and ceremonial observances of Confucianism, especially when what are akin to divine honours are now paid to him who in China stands in the place of Moses.

Yet one cannot withhold one's sympathy from the unregenerate and unconvinced Confucian scholar. If the Jew of old could say of Stephen, or of any preacher of the Gospel, "This man ceaseth not to speak words against the holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered to us," the Confucianist

[1] We are specially indebted to Prof. E. Parker, Dr. Soothill, and Dr. Du Bose, all of whom have witnessed the ceremony, for this description, and have ventured to follow very closely their own words.

can say and mean the same. Ch'ü, as a scholar, fully recognised this, and sought to avoid or to postpone the inevitable clash. For some time he escaped the call to participate actively in the bi-annual ceremony through not being the first Bachelor of Arts in the district, but the third in rank. By degrees, however, his seniors were promoted, and at length the duty fell to his lot. Naturally fearful of the severe ordeal before him, though determined not to conform, he secured a friend, who had no conscientious scruples, to act as his substitute when in the spring the half-yearly festival became due.

The Taning official—the one who had had Chang beaten—was not, however, to be so easily put off. He had conceived a hatred for the foreign religion—for as such he regarded it—and for those engaged in propagating it. And not only had it been reported to him that the scholar Ch'ü was one of the leaders in this foreign faith, but it was asserted that he had pledged his allegiance to the foreigner's monarch, so that he was, in fact, nothing less than a rebel. The official therefore determined that Ch'ü's real position should be challenged without delay.

The occasion for this trial was not far distant, for only a week later there was to be the worship of *Wen Chang*, the god of literature, a god supposed to reside in the constellation known as the Great Bear. This deity, it is believed, prevents the vicious, even though learned, from obtaining academic honours. He is attended by two assistants, named Heaven-Deaf and Earth-Dumb, who are unable to divulge the names of the successful candidates recorded in the book of literary degrees.

By some unhappy coincidence, all the scholars summoned to take part in the ceremony, which takes place before sunrise, overslept themselves, Ch'ü's substitute included, so that when the official arrived the act of worship had to be postponed. This afforded a good excuse for the anger of the official to fall upon Ch'ü, and when the scholars responded to the summons of the Inspector of Education, he alone was ordered to report himself to the Taning magistrate.

Ch'ü at once perceived that he was in for trouble and even feared that his life might be endangered. He therefore begged the Inspector of Education for permission to visit his mother before going to the yamen. This request was refused, and he was bidden to go without delay and see that he did not implicate the Inspector of Education in what had happened. So soon as Ch'ü appeared before the city magistrate, he perceived that his face was dark and scowling, but he still hoped that some opportunity might be afforded him of explaining his position and of bearing testimony in court to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But that was not to be. The brief trial which then took place was subsequently reported by Ch'ü as follows :

Magistrate. " You are an intelligent Bachelor of Arts ; why were you absent from the sacrifices ? "

Ch'ü. " Your Worship, will you please look up your records and see if I have ever missed before."

Magistrate. " Then why now ? "

Ch'ü. " This year there was a reason."

Magistrate. " What reason ? "

Ch'ü. " My lady has given birth to a child, and

I was compelled to be at home. If Confucius does not know everything, what is the good of worshipping him ? If he does know everything, for me to worship him when ceremonially unclean would be to insult him."

Magistrate. " How dare you neglect the laws of the land and ignore the worship of the Great Sage ? "

Ch'ü. " Your worship, be gracious."

But the official was not disposed to be gracious, but rather to vent his wrath, and he therefore ordered the lictors to bring the rod and beat the recalcitrant scholar. Ch'ü's hand was thereupon seized,[1] and he received one hundred stripes. Half praying for grace and half crying for mercy, Ch'ü tried to think of the Apostle Paul who had been beaten with rods for Christ's sake. When the lictors stopped, the official ordered another fifty blows, and then released his prisoner.

That night Ch'ü conducted worship in the home of one of his friends residing in the city. He, however, felt very sore at heart. Why should he have been so shamefully treated when fifteen other scholars who had also failed to be present had all escaped, and he did not feel less mortified when the Inspector of Education subsequently refused to pay him the monetary grant which, in the past, he had regularly received. It was evident that the decisive moment had arrived, and he must now be everything for Christ or nothing.

The next day there was another festival, when

[1] A graduate's person is respected and he is beaten on his hand. Chang had been humiliated by being beaten on his bare thighs.

Ch'ü was expected to attend. For some time he debated with himself what course he ought to pursue; whether to absent himself as before or to be present and not conform. As he had just been punished for absence, and because the Inspector of Education specially commanded him to attend, he appeared at the ceremony, but made no prostration at the appointed time. One of his fellow-scholars urged Ch'ü to conform, arguing that some day he might rise to higher office if he did so, but Ch'ü replied by referring him to the example of the great Jewish scholar Paul, who had counted all things but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus. For some unaccountable reason the official said nothing.

Not many days later there was another festival, this time at the temple in the east suburb of the city, where sacrifices were offered to the god of agriculture, and Ch'ü received special instructions to attend. He came, hoping against hope that he might again avoid taking any part in the prostrations without calling upon himself hostile criticism. His dismay can be better imagined than described when the reader learns that just before the commencement of the ceremony the official called him to the front and bade him stand in the place of honour between himself and the Inspector of Education. Under ordinary circumstances this would have been a high distinction and a much-coveted post, but to Ch'ü it was the last place on earth that he desired.

Ch'ü did the only thing possible under the circumstances. He cried to God for courage and fortitude that he might face in a becoming manner the fearful

ordeal which he saw confronted him. There were four officials present besides the master of proprieties and the other scholars. At a given signal these officials and scholars all prostrated themselves and bowed their heads to the ground three times. To the amazement of all, Ch'ü remained standing in his place between the head magistrate and the Inspector of Education. As the chief official rose to his feet it was seen that his face was flushed with anger, for this act of Ch'ü's was as much an insult to him as it was to the idol. The official, however, only said, "What etiquette (*li*) is this ?" A second time the signal was given, and again all, with the exception of Ch'ü, bowed themselves to the ground and made the threefold obeisance. The chief magistrate's face now assumed a darker and more passionate hue, and the indignation of all the assembled scholars became more pronounced as the official hissed between his teeth, "And what custom (*kwei-k'ü*) is this ?" [1]

For the third time, at the given signal, all the company performed the triple *ko-tow*; while Ch'ü alone remained standing as before. The magistrate now arose in fierce anger, feeling that he had been openly and publicly defied, and, in a tone of bitter scorn and sarcasm, loud enough for all present to hear, he said, "And what contemptuous thing (*tong-si*) is this ?"

During this searching and painful ordeal Ch'ü's mind was for a time severely exercised. He felt himself to be in a cruel dilemma. He had no

[1] These words are literally "compass and square," meaning that by which lines and rules of conduct are drawn.

desire to do dishonour to the chief magistrate of the district in presence of fully one hundred spectators, but he argued to himself, "If I kneel I offend God; if I don't kneel I offend the chief magistrate. I am in a strait 'twixt the two." Speaking subsequently of his experience at this time, he said, "At first my will was uncertain, and I hesitated as to my duty. But then the passage of Scripture, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him *only* shalt thou serve,' flashed through my mind. That word decided me, and I felt a deep peace take possession of me. I thought that my body was made by God, and I ought only to prostrate it before Him; I was not made by an idol, how then could I worship it?"

Ch'ü was in ignorance as to what the magistrate's intentions were, but he had not failed to see him speaking in great anger with the Inspector of Education about what had transpired. On the way back to the residence of the Inspector of Education Ch'ü spoke earnestly to his fellow-scholars in explanation of his conduct. He told them as best he could of the holiness and jealousy of God, of the terrors of eternal punishment, and how it was better to endure any earthly punishment rather than be cast finally into hell.

When Ch'ü had changed his robes for his ordinary dress he found himself confronted by the Inspector of Education, who said to him sternly, "You have occasioned me great fear to-day; how dare you act in such a manner?" Again Ch'ü explained that it was from no desire to do dishonour to the official, but that in the dilemma in which he had been placed

he had felt there was no alternative but to obey God rather than man. He also related to the Inspector the story of the three Hebrew children who had chosen rather to be cast into a burning fiery furnace than to fall down and worship the golden image which the great emperor of old had set up, and he closed by saying, "The magistrate has no fiery furnace, but if he had, could I do less than follow the example of the three Hebrew young men ?"

God seems to have touched the hearts of the master of proprieties and of the Inspector of Education, for together they requested the official to allow the Inspector of Education to administer the punishment which was demanded. This was more honourable than to be beaten in open court, and Ch'ü thanked them for their consideration, adding, however, "No matter who beats me, I have found the door of beating," by which phrase he meant to say that by entering the Church he had opened the door to persecution. In the end the Inspector of Education had him beaten one hundred stripes, but as the lictor chosen was not ill-disposed towards Ch'ü, this was not so serious a punishment as might have been expected, or as it otherwise would have been. But these persecutions only served to bring the Gospel into greater prominence and to strengthen the faith and courage of those who suffered, so that both they and others became, in the words of the Apostle to the Gentiles, "More abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear."

X

THE REGIONS BEYOND

Christianity is an aggressive faith, whatever else it be; and the power which long ago subdued Greece and Rome and England is not likely to be itself defeated in India or China.—H. M. GWATKIN.

IN the late autumn of 1884, a few months before the persecutions recorded in the previous chapter and prior to Ch'ü's appointment as elder, Chang and Ch'ü set forth from Mulberry Crag on a journey of about one hundred miles to the north. Their destination was the village of Tao-hsiang, not far from the city of Siaoyi, where there lived a certain man named Hu Chao-ling for whom they had often prayed. Not only was Hu a friend of Chang, but he was the foster-father[1] of Ch'ü, as well as the faithful counsellor of his youth.

Now Hu had for long been an earnest seeker after truth, and in his search not only had he joined a famous sect called the *Kin-tan Kiao*,[2] but had

[1] In China, parents, when afraid a child will not grow up, frequently ask some one to become the child's foster-father, hoping thereby to obtain additional protection against evil influences.

[2] For evidence adduced to prove that the founder of this sect was the same as the famous penman who wrote the Chinese

been actively engaged in advocating the claims of this secret society, the title of which means "Pill of Immortality religion." There is good reason to believe that this sect is indebted for some of its tenets to early Nestorianism, its liturgy in part resembling the Nestorian liturgy discovered by Professor Hall Pelliot at Sachow in 1908. And the resemblance of some of the miracles recorded, such as the changing of water into wine, to those found in the Gospel records, appears to be more than mere coincidence. But whatever the relationship may have been, the corruptions which have crept in have overshadowed any original truth. It is interesting to record that Pastor Hsi was at one time a leader in this sect, which is reported to have more than ten million followers in China.

But Hu of Tao-hsiang, of whom we now speak, had not been prospered in his labours as an advocate and had been driven by sheer necessity to accept employment as a schoolmaster. It was a long time since Chang and Ch'ü had met this friend of theirs, and, moreover, great changes had come over their lives during this period. Full of their newly found faith, they hoped that Hu and his many friends, who had become vegetarians as a means of acquiring merit, might become followers of Jesus Christ. With this ambition they determined, like Andrew and Philip of old who sought out Simon Peter and Nathanael, to seek their friends and proclaim to them that they had found the Messiah. It was for this they had set forth on the five days' journey

ideographs for the Nestorian tablet at Sian, see *The Nestorian Monument in China*, by P. Y. Saeki, S.P.C.K., pp. 48-61.

which separated their respective villages, the rough roads being in some places nothing more than the stony beds of mountain streams, and in other places steep footpaths across the hills.

France was at this time at war with China with reference to Annam and Tonquin, and many wild and exaggerated rumours reached the far-away hills of Shansi. Not a few well-meaning friends, therefore, endeavoured to discourage Chang and Ch'ü from their undertaking such a mission at such a time. All the foreigners, they asserted, Mr. Drake their own pastor at Pingyangfu included, had been driven from the country. The two men, however, were not to be thus lightly turned from their purpose. Even if what was reported should be true, though they had their doubts, they recognised that their responsibility to witness to the truth was only thereby increased. Finding a muleteer who was about to carry grain from the village of Chong-oh, only three miles distant from their home, to a market quite close to their destination, they bargained for the use of one of his animals so that they could alternately walk and ride.

After having travelled nearly twenty-five miles they approached a place called Wu-shih, where the roads branch off in three directions, the road on the left leading north via Sichow to their destination, the one on the right leading to Pingyangfu, while the third led to the important village of Kehcheng. What was their joy when, just before reaching this junction, they should meet two Christians who had been sent by Mr. Drake with a supply of literature and a letter to tell them that the war

with France need not cause them any anxiety. In the kind providence which had ordered this meeting they recognised the hand of God, for had they been but a few miles farther on their journey they would have missed this most welcome and assuring message and the timely supply of hymn-books and other literature. Together they proceeded as far as Wu-shih where, after further conversation and thanksgiving, they separated for their respective destinations.

When Chang and Ch'ü reached the market which was the muleteer's objective, they left him, and, crossing the mountain stream, climbed up a steep fir-clad hill, carrying their luggage and books, until they reached the village where their friend lived. Weary and footsore at the close of this their fifth day of travelling, they entered the home of Hu, to find him full of enthusiasm concerning a new Buddhist sect which he had just entered. So eager was he to impart information about this his latest step, that ere the travellers had begun to explain the object of their visit, Hu was, with all the zeal and ardour of a new convert, exhorting them to follow his example. Chang and Ch'ü wisely and courteously listened to all that he had to say, praying meanwhile for wisdom to answer aright. When their opportunity arrived they tactfully pointed out what to them appeared weak points in this new faith, and then, with full hearts, they told him of the old old story of Jesus and His love, and related how faith in Christ had brought peace and joy into their own lives.

Now that was what Hu's newly found faith had

not done for him. Despite all his religious observances and strict vegetarian regime, he was not happy and he knew it. It was not the new doctrine that his friends explained that alone impressed him, but the unusual testimony that they had really found rest to their souls. Though he at first questioned and hesitated, he gradually gave heed to what his friends professed, and his wife also declared her sympathy with him in what they required. The result was that the idols and tablets in their home were taken out and burned, while his neighbours, not devoid of humour, hearing that he had renounced his vegetarian vows, sent him a present of meat.

On the same day another old man named Chao, who lived hard by, also determined to have done with idolatry. Like Hu, his heart had long been prepared for the message of life, so that the seed fell into good ground and brought forth fruit. This man became a devoted and happy follower of Jesus Christ. In his case Chang and Ch'ü had the joy of destroying his large brass Buddha.

With Hu as their guide, Chang and Ch'ü went from home to home telling the glad tidings of sins forgiven. The record of idol destruction which followed is full of the deepest interest; paper images of the goddess of mercy were burned, handsome brass Buddhas were smashed with an axe, while one large and weighty Buddha, which they feared might not yield to their blows, was found to be full of sand.

Several of the household of the family Li came out on the Lord's side, one lady, a widow of fifty-five, being especially pronounced in her stand for

the new faith. Prayer was also answered in the case of a woman who for many years was said to have been possessed with an evil spirit. She became a humble follower of Christ, and, when dying about a year later, sent her daughter-in-law, since she could not attend herself, to be her representative at the Christian services.

The neighbouring village of Ho-ti, less than two miles from the city of Siaoyi, was also visited, and here other converts were made, three women manifesting special interest in the Gospel. One of these women threw her idols away, one threw them down a deep well, while the third hesitated at first as to taking such a drastic course, saying, "I have worshipped these idols for a whole lifetime and I shrink from doing them harm now." She yielded at length, however, and, being old and slow of memory, bade her young grandchild learn from the scholar Ch'ü a prayer which she might pray when they had gone. She lived to a ripe old age and died when over eighty, rejoicing in the Lord.

Although Chang and Ch'ü were only able to stay for a few weeks in the villages around Siaoyi, they had the joy ere they departed of seeing not only Hu but seven other families give up idolatry and publicly confess their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. Indeed, so deeply did these young converts feel their indebtedness to their visitors from Mulberry Crag for coming so far to tell them such good news, that they made a freewill offering in order to pay their travelling expenses.

It was no wonder that the enemy of souls was roused by the zeal of these two evangelists and

sought to frustrate their labours, for it was not long after this visit to the north ere they experienced the ill-will of the Taning magistrate as related in the preceding chapters. When reports of these persecutions reached the village of Taohsiang—and such news can travel with amazing rapidity despite the lack of rail and telegraph facilities—the faith of the young and immature converts was rudely shaken, and in some cases even failed.

It must be borne in mind that, apart from Hu and one other, none of these uninstructed converts could read. Unable, therefore, to gain strength from the study of God's Word, and having no experienced worker to help build them up in the faith, three of the families, when they heard that Ch'ü had been beaten and deprived of his degree, yielded to local persecution and returned to idolatry.

When in about a year's time Ch'ü again visited them, he was deeply distressed to find what deflections had taken place, and they, on their part, were surprised to find him so bright and cheerful despite all that had happened. His very joy—and Ch'ü was a very joyful Christian who never failed to give full expression to his feelings—gave evidence of a hidden source of calm repose, and this gave weight to his words of reproof and exhortation. On this visit he had the joy of seeing these backsliders repent and others added to the Lord, so that ere he left as many as fifteen families had turned from idols to serve the living and true God. From this time onward Ch'ü made it a matter of duty to visit these converts twice a year, and in this way the foundations of the church in Siaoyi were laid.

XI

A NEW DEPARTURE

The meetings were at first held in private houses. Very humble Christians might be able to lend a room; and if a person of some rank was converted with the whole *familia*, as sometimes happened, that household would be a centre for all the Christians within reach.—H. M. GWATKIN.

UP to the time our story has now reached, no Protestant missionary had attempted to settle in Shansi west of the Fen river. The work of grace so far recorded had all grown up around the two men Chang and Ch'ü. It had become increasingly evident, however, that a stage had been reached when the fellowship and help of a more experienced Christian would be of incalculable benefit to the work. Pingyangfu was located at too great a distance for very much to be done in teaching and guiding the little company of Christians which was being gathered together. In the good providence of God a combination of circumstances at this juncture favoured a new departure. On the one hand several of the well-known Cambridge Band had, under the able escort of Mr. F. W. Baller, reached Shansi, and on the other hand God had been preparing, even by the persecutions recorded, a field of service for some of these.

It will be remembered that friendly representations had been made to the official at Sichow concerning the persecution of Chang and Feng. This superior official—for Taning was subject to Sichow—had most favourably considered the cases, and had not only issued a proclamation stating that Christians were to be allowed religious liberty, but he even went so far as to send a letter written in the most friendly terms expressing his regret that coercion had been employed. So cordial was his letter that it was felt that it would be wise to seek for the opening at Sichow of a central station while such an official was in power. Premises were secured with little difficulty, and on September 16, 1885, Messrs. Beauchamp and Cassels (now Sir Montagu Beauchamp and Bishop W. W. Cassels respectively), accompanied by Mr. Baller, set out from Pingyangfu to take possession.

"After a most delightful journey," wrote Mr. Beauchamp, "that is, if I abstain from mentioning any of the *resting* places by the way," Sichow was reached on a Saturday three or four days later. The house secured contained six rooms, with kitchen and servants' quarters, besides a good well, for the modest rental of only £4 a year. The buildings were, however, in bad repair, but the pioneers entered into possession without delay and soon had part of the premises made more habitable.

The first week-end was naturally a busy time, the Sabbath hardly being a day of rest in consequence of the constant stream of visitors, full of curiosity, from the officials in the yamen down to the poorest beggar. Though the house was in no fit state to

receive guests, these people did not seem to mind. It was no small help at such a time to have Mr. Baller with them to entertain the callers. But Mr. Baller's stay was only a brief one, for on the following Tuesday he bade farewell to the two young workers, who had only been a few months in China and whom he now left in as promising a sphere of service as any missionary could hope to find.

How they entered upon their work can best be told by an extract from a letter written by Mr. Beauchamp not long after Mr. Baller's departure :

" So now we are quite alone. About the third day after Mr. Baller left we started a regular afternoon meeting, always choosing a time when we happened to have most visitors. The attendance averages from about twelve to twenty, the meetings being conducted by Mr. Feng.

" Fortunately I have brought with me three large wall texts which I got written out at Pingyangfu ; these we put up in our reception room, a large room occupying the whole north side of the court. The three texts are Matt. xi. 28 ; Rom. v. 8 ; and Heb. vii. 25. These generally form the subject of conversation — in fact, as our vocabulary is so limited we are glad to be able to point to these words and occasionally to turn to other passages of the Testament.

" Some of the questions asked are most amusing. After the invariable enquiry as to your honourable name and your exalted age, we are frequently questioned as to our wives and children, also as to what we eat, and does the sun shine in your country, etc.

"Every third day there is a market, which increases our visitors by the number of people who come in from the country round. This gives us an opportunity of scattering seed in the form of books and Gospels. Sichow is not by any means a large city, but it is important as a centre of government. The people are in many respects different from those who live in the plains and busy cities; the hills cut them off from many of the ordinary surroundings; they are therefore a simple country people and consequently a large proportion cannot read, which is a considerable handicap as we know so little of the language. Notwithstanding this, it is not an uncommon occurrence for a man to stay with us an hour, sometimes two or three hours, just reading passages from the Word of God and other books. In fact, some of the same people come day after day for no other purpose. It is very encouraging to have a large number of boys coming in; as a rule the children are afraid of the foreigner, but here we seem quite to have won their confidence."

But leaving Messrs. Beauchamp and Cassels in Sichow to carry on their work, it will not be without interest for us to follow Mr. Baller in his return journey to Pingyangfu. Instead of going straight back by the road by which he had come, he made a detour to the extent of some fifty miles in order that he might visit the village of Mulberry Crag. Among the hills he missed his path, and being retarded by the rough mountain roads, he did not reach the village until long after dark, both hungry and footsore, but his weariness was soon forgotten by what he saw. To quote his own words:

"On entering the cave house of Elder Ch'ü, however, I saw that which refreshed me at once. On the table lay copies of the Old and New Testament. Both were open and had evidently been studied. On the left-hand side of the cave John iii. 16 was written on a good-sized piece of paper, and on each side was a suitable inscription in favour of the Word of God. At the end of the cave several passages from the Gospel of John were neatly written on large sheets of paper which were flanked by similar inscriptions. To feel that I was under the roof of a Christian in such an out-of-the-way place took away a good deal of my weariness. They gave me a most hearty welcome and fairly outdid themselves in their efforts to prepare me a supper."

But this important part of their hospitality over—and we can easily imagine how they would lavish upon their "guest from afar" all that local conditions could supply—about twenty persons, some of whom were women, gathered together for evening worship. There in that obscure village, in its arched cave-like dwelling, dimly lit by primitive oil lamps and maybe candles, that little company of believers and enquirers enjoyed, in that "church in the house," a discourse such as they had never heard before, for in Mr. Baller they would find not only one who could speak their language even more fluently than many of themselves, but one who was a past master in pressing home the truth by illustrations and allusions with which they would be familiar. It must have been a rare occasion for that out-of-the-way place; it was, as Mr. Baller

himself acknowledged, "a time of much power from the presence of the Lord."

We may be sure that both Chang and Ch'ü must have rejoiced greatly that missionaries had at length come to settle in their district, and, as time and opportunity allowed, they would not fail to call and see them, though Sichow was at least some thirty or forty miles distant. Of the impression that Ch'ü made upon the young missionaries we may gather something from what Mr. Cassels wrote after Ch'ü's second visit:

"The more we see of Ch'ü, the more we praise God for him. He is a man with a great deal more animation than most Chinese that we have had anything to do with. Rather reserved, perhaps, at first, but when he begins to speak about the spread of the Gospel, his face lights up and he talks away so fast and so enthusiastically that it is quite impossible for us to follow him."

Ch'ü's bright and cheery manner was not the result of easy circumstances, it need hardly be said, but of true joy in God. Not only did he know persecution from without, but, what is far more testing, he experienced it within his home. His unconverted wife was an unceasing trial to him. Being a daughter of a literary family, her people, who were very bitter against the Gospel, encouraged her in her resentment of her husband's manner of life and of his practice of holding Gospel meetings in his home.

During one of his visits to Sichow, Chang learned that Mr. Cassels would like to open a station at Taning if that were possible. With the Sichow

official so friendly, this was more easy than otherwise would have been the case, and Chang was soon prospered in his search for premises, though these were somewhat rough and dilapidated. Therefore, early in 1886, in the first week of the Chinese New Year, Mr. Cassels reached Taning city to take up residence. What these first Mission premises were like and what was the missionary's manner of life at this time may best be described by a quotation from part of a letter written by Mr. Cassels himself on March 8, 1886. Let it be remembered that the work of which he speaks had grown up as a result of God's blessing on the testimony of Chang and Ch'ü :

" I arrived here on February 10, and have now met with all the Christians and have visited most of them in their own homes. They comprise some twenty-two families, and live in the most out-of-the-way villages, chiefly among the hills, at a distance of three to ten miles west of the city. With two or three exceptions, it was the first time they had met with a missionary, and I have been most warmly welcomed by them all. As far as I have been able to judge, they are warm-hearted and consistent Christians, from the young convert of sixty years old to the lad of twelve who is comparatively an old Christian, having known the Lord nearly two years.

" On first coming into the city, I put up in the only habitable room of a broken-down house, which was the only place I could get. On the brick bed of this room, for it was nearly all *kang*, I lived with my teacher and servant, and any Christians who

came in from the villages to see me. Here we slept, read, and prayed, and the food was cooked and eaten. But the Lord, ever watchful of the interests of His children, no doubt thought I ought to have a better place than a couple of square feet in a cave-room; so after a fortnight the Yamen people, who like neither foreigner nor Christian—having kept out the former as represented by Mr. David Hill, who wanted to distribute relief here in the famine time, and having persecuted the latter to the best of their powers—now influenced my landlord and got me turned out, with the result that I am now in a better house, and as it is owned by the father of some of the Christians, I am expecting to be left undisturbed. Thanks be to God.

"The work in the city itself is very encouraging. . . . As to myself, God has sustained me wonderfully under many inconveniences. I have had a continual stream of visitors since I have been here. They burst their way in before I am up in the morning, and do not leave me until last thing at night. I am now getting a few letters written while surrounded with sightseers, who are never tired of examining my Bible and my pen and pencil, which are almost the only foreign things I have with me."

It is a remarkable testimony to the friendliness of the people that they were willing to help the foreigner by lending him furniture and other necessary things for his home. In a letter written after he had been in Taning little more than three months, he said: "The people here are very friendly; let me give you an instance. Expecting only to be here for a short time, and for other reasons, I

scarcely bought anything in the way of furniture or cooking utensils, and nearly all the things necessary have been lent me by people in the city; not Christians, for when I came there were none."

It is interesting to recall that long after Mr. Cassels had left, people in the city would come to his successors to claim some of the goods they had lent Chang for the missionary's use. Even ten years later, when the writer's sister (now Mrs. Ritchie) was taking down from Chang, then the pastor of the city church, those autobiographical notes upon which much of this story is based, he remarked that there was still one broken chair on the Mission premises which had never been reclaimed. As another interesting sidelight upon the disposition of the people in this little hill-country district, it may be worth recording that upon one occasion, when the writer was present, the keys of the city gate were actually entrusted to a missionary, as he and his party did not expect to get back from the country until after dark!

But we must return to our story. In April 1886 another Church Conference was held at Ping-yangfu, which at that time was the mother-church of the district. To be present at this gathering, Messrs. Beauchamp and Cassels temporarily left their stations, but unfortunately Ch'ü was too poorly to travel. The Conference was a time of blessing and encouragement, some two hundred persons being assembled in spite of heavy rain. On this occasion fifty-three men and nineteen women confessed their faith in Christ by baptism, four of

Ch'ü's converts from west of the river being among this number.

But while God's people were thus gathered together for blessing, the enemies of the Church were also taking counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed. The magistrate at Sichow, who had been so friendly, had been replaced by another of an entirely different spirit, and he was, among other things, bitterly anti-foreign. Ere he had been in office two weeks, he began to bully the landlord of the Mission premises and to make things uncomfortable for everybody. The previous official had been liked by the people, and his departure was perhaps as much regretted by them as by the missionary. With the chief magistrate maligning the foreigner, it was not long ere wild rumours were current all over the district, to the effect that these foreigners really did bewitch those who came under their influence. It will readily be understood that this change at Sichow removed the restraint which had been for some time on the Taning official, and soon these two men were in close consultation as to how they might root out the detested foreign heresy from the whole district. To this end charges were laid against several of the Christians, and even against the missionaries. It was asserted that Mr. Cassels had visited the Buddhist temple on the hill over against the Taning city, and had actually destroyed one of the idols.

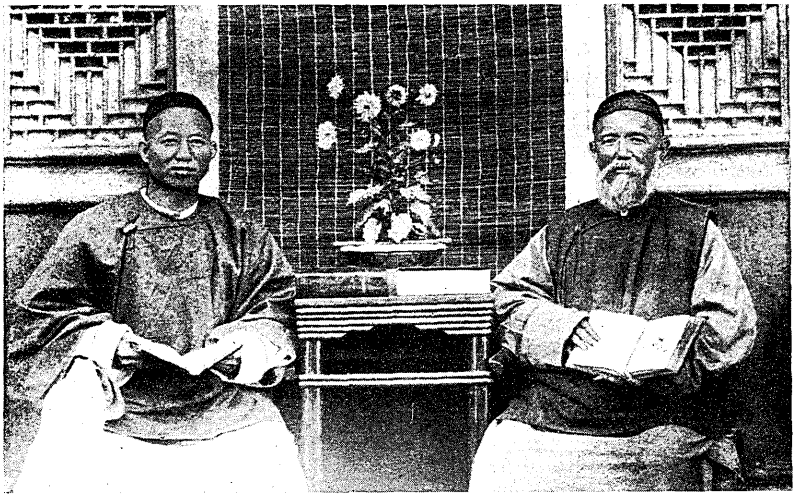
It is not improbable that Christian tracts really had been posted up in this temple by Chang, the ex-Buddhist priest, for he had persuaded not a

few of his Buddhist friends to leave their temples, and not long after the time of which we speak, Mr. William Key, when visiting this temple, was surprised to find Scripture portions on the walls. What he actually found may be given in his own words: "On entering the priest's room I found the walls ornamented with Gospel tracts and text-cards, and was told that when the people came to visit the idols, this priest preached the Gospel to them." This man subsequently left the temple and became a professed follower of the Lord Jesus, and he was by no means the only priest who forsook Buddhism, though unhappily not many of them took a definite stand for Christ. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that Satan should stir up the spirit of persecution when such an onset was being made against the forces of darkness.

When news of these untoward happenings reached Pingyangfu, four days after the Conference had closed, Messrs. Beauchamp and Cassels set out without delay that they might be with the persecuted flock and deny the charges which had been made against themselves. "It is impossible to conceive," wrote Mr. Beauchamp at this time, "even here in the midst of it, the appalling darkness, superstition, and prejudice which hold these people. It is at times like these that one needs not only to say, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost,' but to act as one who does believe in Him."

Mr. Beauchamp and Mr. Cassels appear to have separated in the course of their return journey, Mr. Beauchamp going on to Sichow while Mr. Cassels proceeded alone to Taning. It was a trying

experience, as Bishop Cassels still recalls, when, as a young missionary, he entered the city only to find the house locked up and himself unable to get in. There was nothing for it but to set out alone in the dark for the village of Mulberry Crag. It was a stormy night, and there on that lonely journey among the hills he experienced great difficulty in persuading his little donkey to cross the river at the fording. Entrance into the premises was subsequently secured by taking the door off its hinges. Happily, in answer to prayer, the return of the missionaries to Taning and Sichow helped to restore peace, though they were conscious that the officials were only waiting for a fresh occasion to destroy the work.



PASTORS CHANG AND CH'Ü.

From an old and much-faded photograph which does not do them credit.
Pastor Chang is wearing a beard.

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XII

CH'Ü APPOINTED PASTOR

Every church was independent of the rest, and free to serve Christ in its own way, if only it did serve Christ. Yet the churches were not without external bonds, and were gradually drawn together by the logic of events.—H. M. GWATKIN.

WHILE Chang was assisting Mr. Cassels at Taning, Ch'ü was encouraged to devote himself to the preaching of the Gospel throughout the surrounding country. So impressed was Mr. Beauchamp with his peculiar gifts as an evangelist that, upon the occasion of a visit to his home in Mulberry Crag, he offered to purchase him a donkey to assist him in travelling from place to place if he would devote his energies to this special ministry.

This offer came at a somewhat critical moment in Ch'ü's life, for the village elders were at that time discussing his reappointment as the village schoolmaster. Ch'ü's heart was really set upon preaching the Gospel, but being a poor man, he did not see how this ambition was to be realised. The offer of a donkey he recognised as kind and generous, but to accept such a gift would only have increased his expenses. He therefore declined Mr. Beauchamp's offer, but indicated at the same time that if the sum needed to buy the donkey

could be at his disposal for the hire of a farm labourer, he would then feel free to leave his home and fields, and give himself heart and soul to the work of the Gospel. To this suggestion Mr. Beauchamp readily responded, and the gift he then received, a sum equal to about twenty Mexican dollars, Ch'ü ever afterwards regarded as God's way of setting before him an open door for the ministry of the Word.

But just at this time Ch'ü was called to pass through a period of much distress of soul. It began with a somewhat serious illness brought on by a severe chill. Travelling with a friend in the depth of winter when they had only one animal between them, he got alternately hot and cold by first walking and then riding. The result was that when he reached Sichow he was in a high temperature. The *kang*, or brick bed, that night being overheated only aggravated his symptoms, and he rapidly became seriously indisposed.

After the lapse of a week he was removed by litter as far as Taning, being subsequently carried home on a small inverted table, this being apparently the most appropriate stretcher that could be locally improvised. It is fairly certain from Ch'ü's own story that he was more or less delirious through fever at this time, and this possibly in part accounts for the great fear and tremblings which came upon him through the visions of the night. His descriptions of those days recall the words of Job :

> Then Thou scarest me with dreams
> And terrifiest me with visions,
> So that my soul choseth strangling
> And death rather than these my bones.

Before his mind's eye he saw a door open on one side of his bed, and there standing, as he imagined, was the Person of Jesus Christ, saying in solemn tones, "Ch'ü Wang-yih, I have not chosen you; you are not my chosen." Deeply troubled, he besought Mr. Cassels to pray for him, promising that if restored he would be Christ's true and good disciple. But the reply came back, "Teacher Ch'ü, you cannot be Christ's disciple." He then besought the Chinese Christians to intercede for him, and that Chang should consult the Bible for comfort. The only word, however, that Chang could find was the passage saying Jesus was fast asleep in the boat.

These various visions of the night, and many others like them, in which Scripture incidents and passages were strangely mixed, were very real to him, and the remembrance of them remained for years vividly stamped upon his memory. Sometimes hope would quicken, as, for instance, when the story of the impotent man, who had lain for long by the pool of Bethesda, and yet after years of impotence had been healed by Jesus, gained ascendancy over his mind. Then again, the parable of the rich man in hell, longing for a drop of water to cool his tongue, plunged him into a fever of fear of eternal torment.

Nor was he helped when he learned, as the fever abated, that the city magistrate had ordered him to appear at another festival. The Inspector of Education had protested to the official that Ch'ü was too ill to come, but as in China diplomatic sickness is a well-known expedient for avoiding

awkward engagements, the official was not thus to be put off.

It was this sickness which, as mentioned in the preceding chapter, had prevented Ch'ü accompanying Messrs. Cassels and Beauchamp to Pingyangfu, and it was at this time, when the foreigners were away and the Sichow official had been changed, that a series of fresh persecutions set in. Many of the country Christians scattered, hoping that the storm would blow over, but Ch'ü was far too weak to move. Chang had gone to see if he could obtain help, while Ch'ü, with his mother and Mrs. Yang, remained at Mulberry Crag. Praying for guidance, they opened the Bible and lighted upon the passage in the Acts of the Apostles telling of Peter and John being brought before the rulers. Not thinking this passage sufficiently favourable, they prayed again, and then again opened the Scriptures, only to find the same chapter. Then came the trying news that the son of the landlord to whom the Mission premises belonged had been cast into prison, and that the yamen underlings were out to arrest the Church members.

What they should do they did not know. Should they seek to hide or not ? Again seeking for Divine guidance, they prayed and opened the Bible, this time at the passage in the Acts, " Refrain from these men and let them alone ; for if this counsel or this work be of man, it will be overthrown ; but if it is of God ye will not be able to overthrow them ; lest haply ye be found to be fighting against God." This passage somewhat encouraged them to hope for deliverance, but they were still exercised in

mind as to whether it would be glorifying to God for them to hide themselves or not. At first Ch'ü thought that to hide would be rather a mean action, but, recalling the occasion when the Apostle Paul had escaped over the city wall at Damascus in a basket, he thought that perhaps he, a weaker disciple, might without offence do the same.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Cassels, much to the joy and comfort of all, suddenly arrived at Mulberry Crag, having, as already recorded, found the Mission premises at Taning locked on his return. He told the trembling Christians that they must not put their trust in him, but in God, though he was willing himself, if necessary, to go to prison with them. Together they returned to Taning, where later they were joined by Chang. Fearing that the officials might search the premises, they burnt the list of Christians and enquirers, lest it might be used for purposes of persecution.

But Ch'ü's troubles were not at an end. Though improving in health he was tried and much tempted in spirit. The official, he knew, was unfriendly and only seeking an excuse for further persecution, while the Inspector of Education, who was personally well disposed towards him, constantly urged him to break with the Church and as a patriot be loyal to the traditions of his fathers. Happily, at the time when this pressure was brought to bear upon him Ch'ü's mother stood by him and encouraged him in Christian fortitude. Such encouragement in his home was all the more welcome and needed because Ch'ü had to endure the constant revilings of his wife and the hostile attitude of his wife's people.

But in addition to these outward trials he was passing through a period of painful travail of soul, possibly in part arising from physical depression after his illness. A deep sense of failure and sin took possession of him. When he had been baptized he was somewhat of a self-righteous man, but now everybody and everything seemed to be better than he. In what follows we shall adhere as closely as possible to his own quaint phraseology as he in subsequent years related his experiences at this time.

Looking upon the cattle in the fields he felt he was not equal to a beast. The beast did its duty; it did not sin; it had no soul, and was therefore not in danger of hell fire. As he looked upon nature he felt he was not equal even to a tree. The tree grew steadily in size and beauty; it was long-lived and served a useful purpose, while he was a mere cumberer of the ground. For some weeks even prayer had been almost impossible. The fact that he had begrudged the losing of his degree, that he had thought his worldly honour in any sense comparable to the great grace of preaching the Gospel, was a proof that he was utterly unworthy. He must have been deceived either by the devil or by himself as to the condition of his own heart. What should he do? He dared not desist from preaching and yet he felt so unworthy.

Many a time he opened his Bible, hoping to light upon the words, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," but he opened the Book in vain. Often when by himself his tears flowed freely, and one day speaking to a friend he said, "Just see the kind of man I am. Would that I had died and my brother lived."

One cry which frequently escaped his lips was, "Lord, when shall I be arrayed in bright and pure garments, the garments which are the righteous acts of the saints?"

At length a day arrived when he felt that this struggle could continue no longer. "One man," he said, "cannot bear two burdens, cannot endure the burden of his own sins and the burden of preaching. I must be delivered from the one or the other." Falling upon his knees in an agony he prayed, "O Lord, either relieve me of this load of sin or release me from the responsibility of preaching. If Thou wilt pardon my sin I will never again complain; I will never again say in summer, 'It is too hot to preach,' nor will I say in winter, 'It is too cold to travel.' If the hills are steep and the roads rough I will not make these things an excuse for not going; if the bridge is narrow and dangerous I will not let cowardice hold me back. If Thou wilt but pardon my sins I will risk everything for Thee. Yes, Lord, even my degree shall be as dross, even life itself shall be of no account in comparison with the ministry I have received from Thee."

But still no relief came to this burdened soul. When labouring in the fields and scorched by the mid-day heat he thought, "What is this in comparison with the fires of hell; hell must be a thousand times worse than this." And at night his dreams were coloured by these agitations of his mind. Once as he dreamed he saw three crowns piled one upon another, and as he wondered what this might mean he heard as it were a voice saying, "Let no one take thy crown." By day and by night his thoughts

and meditations were all connected with this same distress. If to the Western mind some of these things may appear fanatical and strange, to him they all had a deep significance.

Though still distressed, his sense of duty compelled him to set out to proclaim the way of Life, for had he not accepted Mr. Beauchamp's money for that purpose? He set forth therefore to relieve his conscience, but the very day after he had started a messenger overtook him to say that Mr. Cassels wished him to accompany him to Pingyangfu to meet Mr. Hudson Taylor. This was the memorable occasion when Mr. Hudson Taylor and Mr. J. W. Stevenson visited Shansi in the summer of 1886, and which has been described in the life of Pastor Hsi. It was at the Conference at Hungtung that Pastor Hsi, with another pastor, and eighteen elders and deacons were set apart for the service of the Church, and immediately after this a similar Conference was held at Pingyangfu, and it was to this latter gathering that Elder Ch'ü was invited.

At first Ch'ü was in doubt as to his proper course of action. His only son was sick; ought he to leave him at such a time for so long a journey? That his duty was to stay at home was strongly urged upon him by his wife and all her people, but then he had heard much of the venerable Hudson Taylor, of his life and devotion to China and of his power in faith and prayer. See him he must. Maybe through him he would obtain deliverance from his burden of sin or the burden of preaching. So to every argument to the contrary he now replied, "My Heavenly Father has many sick children whose

condition is far more serious than my son's. They have sickness of the soul and are in danger of eternal death, whereas my child is sick in body only. I must go and see this venerable Pastor Taylor, maybe I shall be blessed through him so that through my ministry God may be able to heal many of his sin-sick children." He therefore set off for Taning, where he found not only Mr. Cassels but Mr. Hoste, in whose company he travelled to the Conference.

Ch'ü's state of mind during the journey to Ping-yangfu is well illustrated by the fact that, though he hired a mule to ride, he became so oppressed by the consciousness of sin that he felt unworthy to mount the animal. In China riding is looked upon as a superior position; no rider would ask a question of a pedestrian without dismounting, nor would any but a high official ride through a city. The respectful traveller always dismounts at the city gate or as he passes a Confucian temple, and so Ch'ü felt unworthy to ride in presence of his brethren, and he actually allowed the attendant muleteer to ride in his place while he walked behind—and this was the erstwhile proud Confucian scholar.

As the journey progressed he resolved to ask Mr. Hudson Taylor to relieve him from his office and responsibility as elder and to allow him to be simply a humble member of the Church. His conversations by the way all bore upon his inward meditations. Among the many questions he asked Mr. Cassels, and the replies received, the following are some he recalled in later years:

Ch'ü. "To what may the blood of Christ and a man's sins be compared?"

Mr. Cassels. "The blood of Christ is like the boundless ocean and a man's sins as a stone which is swallowed up and lost in the mighty deep."

Ch'ü. "If Cain after he had murdered his brother Abel had repented, could he have been saved?"

Mr. Cassels. "Yes, the promise is that if we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Ch'ü. "What kind of a man must one be to have peace?"

Mr. Cassels. "A man must be crucified with Christ and thus become dead to the world. If a dead man is praised he makes no response; if he is blamed he is still indifferent; such a man is at peace."

Shortly after reaching Pingyangfu he learned for the first time, through one of the Chinese Christians, that he had been nominated as pastor of the work west of the Fen River. At this news he felt greatly dismayed. His highest hopes had been to ask Mr. Taylor to pray that his sins might be forgiven. The next morning he had a personal interview with Mr. Taylor when he confessed his weakness and unworthy state. Mr. Taylor's reply, which was "But Christ's power is made perfect in our weakness," did not wholly satisfy him, so he sought out Pastor Hsi and besought him to intercede on his behalf. He pleaded that he had really purposed to resign his office and certainly not to accept a higher one. Pastor Hsi, however, refused to comply with this request, and finally, after some further conversation with Mr. Taylor and others, he resolved

to yield to the judgment of those who had been in Christ before him.

In recording these experiences, as related by Pastor Ch'ü in later years, we do not forget that Chinese etiquette alone requires a man to speak in terms of self-depreciation. That element was doubtless present, but by no means accounts for all. There was much more than anything courtesy could demand. At the ordination service which followed, when he was appointed as pastor over the Western hills and Siaoyi district, he longed that Mr. Taylor would pray that his sins might be forgiven. Mr. Taylor, however, did not do so, but prayed rather that grace might be given him for the responsibilities now laid upon him by God and the Church; that he might be filled with the Holy Spirit, and that he might so labour as to win the Master's "Well done" at the end of his course. Mr. Taylor made no reference to Ch'ü's sins. Ch'ü, who had been hoping that he might, was troubled at this omission, but he listened with comfort and hope to the charge given by Mr. Stevenson as he preached upon the words, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." That message was just what he needed, so he listened with joyful expectation, and when Dr. Edwards in prayer followed along the lines of the sermon, his hope was that God's "shortly" might be now.

Eagerly he listened to the conversations of the missionaries and Christians gathered together, noting especially the peace and joy displayed upon the face and in the manner of Mr. Hudson Taylor and others. And when Stanley Smith preached and laid emphasis

upon the way in which God was ready and waiting to bless, and illustrated his discourse by showing that the lepers, the blind, and the dumb were all healed quickly and not slowly, his heart yearned to enter immediately into the fullness of blessing. Though some measure of peace did possess him ere he set forth upon his return journey, he had not received that joy which so characterised his life in later years. But his desires were to be fulfilled, for in a moment not to be forgotten the Lord was yet to come suddenly to His temple. This experience, however, belongs to a later part of our story.

XIII

A MEMORABLE DEPUTATION

Explain it as we may, something came into the world with Jesus of Nazareth which has caused a revolution of a higher order than the migration of the nations and rise and fall of empires.—H. M. GWATKIN.

A LANDMARK in the history of the work west of the Fen River had now been reached. During Mr. Hudson Taylor's visit to the province it had been decided that Messrs. Cassels and Beauchamp should leave Shansi and open up work in western China, in that district over which Mr. Cassels subsequently became Bishop. The thought of losing these two missionaries was a sore trial to the Chinese Christians at Taning and Sichow, for though their stay had not exceeded a few months, they had greatly endeared themselves to the people. Moreover, it was no small comfort to have their presence when persecution might be renewed.

But the call of the regions beyond was too insistent to be unheeded, and the needs of this part of Shansi looked as if they might at least in part be met by Pastor Ch'ü, as he was now called, and by Elder Chang. To help in the establishment of the new conditions and to encourage and strengthen

the faith of the young converts among the western hills, it was decided that they should be visited by a small deputation. Fain would they have had Mr. Taylor himself come into their midst, but that could not be. Yet after a visit with Mr. Taylor to the home of Pastor Hsi—the visit so graphically recorded in the life-story of that man—Pastor Hsi, accompanied by Mr. J. W. Stevenson and Mr. Stanley Smith, set off with Pastor Ch'ü towards the end of August to visit the district west of the Fen River.

It was a slow and arduous journey though full of deep interest. The hills with their oaks and cattle reminded some of the deputation of the home country, while the grandeur of the bold and rocky mountain passes and the mountain torrents were found a refreshing contrast to the sultry plain. The most difficult portion of the journey came when they neared the city of Taning, for on one day they had to wade the river no less than thirty times in following the tortuous path along the valley.

After a brief stay in the city the little company passed on to Mulberry Crag, this journey of some thirteen or fourteen miles being by no means easy. Rain had poured in torrents the night before they set out, and, as the whole district is composed of precipitous hills which drain very rapidly, the river along which the so-called road to Mulberry Crag wended its way had swollen to a roaring torrent racing down to the Yellow River which flows only ten miles away.

Pastor Chü's home, with its ten cave-like dwellings, was reached early in the afternoon. Here the converts gathered, or such as could do so, for the

swollen state of the mountain stream prevented many from coming that night. There was, however, enough to do, for the examination of candidates for baptism lasted well on past midnight.

In all no fewer than nineteen persons, twelve men and seven women, were accepted, and on the following Sunday all these were baptized, by Mr. Stevenson, in a part of the river admirably suited for the purpose, in the presence of a wondering crowd. That same evening these newly received members of the little church gathered with their elders and their visitors around the Lord's table, this service being conducted by the two Chinese Pastors, Hsi and Ch'ü. This meeting was protracted till past eleven o'clock, a somewhat late hour for the East.

Without enlarging on the details of this memorable occasion, it must suffice to say that Pastor Ch'ü and Elder Chang were greatly helped and strengthened by the sympathy and support they then received. They on their part in true Chinese fashion lavished hospitality upon their guests. "Our stay at Mr. Ch'ü's," wrote Stanley Smith, "though so short was delightful. There was such an absence of formality, such natural friendliness, one felt quite the home feeling that should always be present when Christians meet. There were plenty of little children too romping about between times, Blind Man's Buff being attempted once with them to the amusement of young and old.

"Mr. Ch'ü was most lavish in his hospitality—nothing seemed too good for us, no trouble too great. Knowing we English were meat eaters,

nothing would do but to have a young goat brought in and killed—killed in the courtyard as of old in England. It was quite hard to leave them. Mr. Ch'ü's mother, on being reminded of steadfastness, said at once, 'No, my love for Jesus shall never change.' This old lady, one of those who received baptism, has a beautiful face beaming with the peace and joy that are within. Mr. Ch'ü's wife, alas, does not yet believe; she cannot get over her husband suffering persecution."

From the Taning and Sichow districts the same party, with the addition of Mr. William Key, set out for the north that they might also visit the few Christians who were living in the villages around Siaoyi. After three or four days of travelling the mountain village of Taohsiang was reached, long after dark, and here they were warmly welcomed and housed in one of the cave dwellings. In the course of the journey north, Stanley Smith on one occasion, when bubbling over with joy, had said to Pastor Ch'ü, "Pastor Ch'ü, I wish I had a hundred mouths with which to preach Jesus." Ch'ü listened but made no reply; such wild words, he thought, were sheer exaggeration; one mouth is enough for any man—why should he want a hundred? But he was soon to understand.

Several days were spent at Taohsiang among the little company of converts, more than thirty gathering together for the services, examination, and the baptisms. Of this number ten, six women and four men, were baptized, and, as at Mulberry Crag, the two Chinese pastors, Hsi and Ch'ü, conducted the communion service. "It would have rejoiced your

heart," wrote Mr. Stevenson, "to have heard some of the answers by the women, and men as well, when it was pointed out to them that their profession would involve them in persecution and even death might be the outcome. It was put to them whether, in the face of these things, they would still continue to follow Christ, and they eagerly replied, 'Rather let life go than Christ.' It was glorious to hear such testimonies from those so recently without the least knowledge of the Gospel." This forecast was not imaginary, for some were to suffer death in this district not many years later, and it may be recorded that three of those then received into the newly formed Church subsequently became deacons.

But this visit over, the deputation was to scatter. Mr. Stevenson's duties called him back to the coast, while Pastor Hsi and Stanley Smith had to return to Hungtung in the Pingyangfu district, travelling south along the great north road. In his parting message, Mr. Stevenson encouraged Pastor Ch'ü by reminding him that there was a crown of rejoicing awaiting those who faithfully fulfilled their task. God would yet tread down Satan under his feet as formerly Satan had oppressed him.

Alone Ch'ü returned to the villages around Siaoyi, conscious in a new sense of his onerous responsibilities and of his utter dependence upon God. It was at this time that he was prepared for his ministry by entering into a new and fuller enjoyment of life in Christ. In preaching he became conscious of a new power and of greater liberty. "As I preached," he afterwards stated, "I recognised a change had

taken place. Things were not as before. Preaching one day in the village of Ho-ti on the first chapter of Colossians, I found my mouth full of words—everything seemed full, my heart, the Book, yes, even the table." "This," he felt, "must be the Holy Spirit come upon me. God has filled my mouth with His message and my heart with joy."

But this was not all. When visiting one of the villages, he did not remember which, he sat down one day to read the Scriptures, which he opened at Acts xx. As he read the thirty-second verse, which in Chinese is translated, "God is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified," the words seemed to stand out of the very page before his eyes, altogether apart from their context. As he saw in vision before him those friends whom he had recently met in Pingyangfu, in whose faces he had beheld the light and peace of God, and as he recalled the words of Stanley Smith that Christ had healed the sick immediately and not slowly, he accepted the assurance that God was able to build *him* up and to give *him* an inheritance among all the sanctified.

What then transpired became apparent to all. The Christians recognised that their friend and pastor had been baptized with power, and that he spoke with a liberty he had not enjoyed before. He who had so long mourned for his sins had at length received "the garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." This experience was no mere passing emotion, for from that time joy was his outstanding characteristic, and he became one

of the most attractive and successful preachers of the Gospel that God has given to His Church in China. The sedate, unimpassioned manner of the Confucian scholar gave way in Ch'ü to an enthusiasm and a demonstrativeness which was most unusual in a Chinese.

XIV

TOWARD THE SOUTH COUNTRY

Behind St. Paul, behind the Twelve, was a crowd of obscure missionaries. Some of them might devote themselves to the work, and wander like apostles; but every Christian was a missionary in his place and measure, and the common intercourse of trade and life spread the Gospel far and wide.—H. M. GWATKIN.

IT had been made clearly evident to Mr. Taylor during his stay in Shansi and to Mr. Stevenson by his visits to the villages of Mulberry Crag and Taohsiang, that every effort should be made to foster the good work which had begun. Therefore, early in 1887, the year which followed Ch'ü's appointment as pastor, two ladies were designated to Taning, two other ladies were appointed to Siaoyi, while Mr. and Mrs. William Key went to reside at Sichow, and give such help throughout the district as circumstances might demand. It is interesting to note that from that time to this Taning has always been worked by lady missionaries, and the same has, with brief exceptions, been true of Siaoyi, while Sichow has been held as a station for married workers.

At Taning the two ladies were the Misses Scott

and Miles. By their tact, sympathy, and devotion these two soon won the love and esteem of the little church. In all things Elder Chang was their trusted counsellor and friend, first in the study of the language and later in the varied activities of the station. With the assistance of Mrs. Yang, work was commenced among the women, and a school was established for the daughters of the Christians. Pastor Ch'ü also opened a school for boys at Mulberry Crag, where he installed as schoolmaster Mr. Hu, his foster-father and convert from Taohsiang.

At Siaoyi the two ladies were the Misses Whitchurch and Seed, both eager and aggressive soul-winners. At first part of a farmhouse was mortgaged for their residence in a village near to where the majority of the Christians lived. Here classes for the converts were held, and opium refuge work was commenced both for men and women. The house, however, proved damp and unsuitable, and the two missionaries were most thankful, after the lapse of some months, to secure a small house in the south suburb of the city. In the summer of 1888 a little church was built adjoining this house, and in the autumn of the same year thirteen more converts were added to the Church after confession of their faith in Christ by baptism. Most of these were the first-fruits of the opium refuge work. In all these and subsequent developments, Pastor Ch'ü was the ladies' much-valued friend and helper.

But while we leave these ladies and Mr. and Mrs. Key to carry on the work at Taning, Siaoyi, and Sichow respectively, we desire to follow certain developments in another direction. Hitherto the

work had extended around Taning and in the country to the north, but the course of our story now takes us towards the south country. In the month of January 1889, Elder Chang set out on a journey to the neighbouring city of Kichow, situated some forty miles south-west of Taning, with the object of preaching the Gospel there and with the hope of securing a house for more permanent missionary operations.

For several weeks he made his home in an inn situated in the south suburb, and engaged in preaching the Gospel and in distributing Scriptures and tracts. Not only was he prospered in his efforts to secure premises, for he rented a small house from one of the innkeeper's relatives, but he was brought into touch with some whose hearts God had prepared for the message of life. One of these was a Buddhist devotee and vegetarian, also named Chang, Chang Fuh-teh being his full title. This man manifested the keenest interest in the Gospel message, and a few months later became one of the first-fruits, under God, in this district.

Another man whom Elder Chang met was a farmer named Tan, who had come to the same inn with several donkey-loads of persimmons for placing on the market. His home was in one of the few cave-villages belonging to the Hotsin district, situated some fifty miles farther south. Being a heavy opium-smoker, he had reached that stage when he longed for deliverance from the degrading bondage of this drug. Eagerly he listened to Elder Chang as he told, from his personal experience as an opium-smoker, of Christ's willingness and power

to save. Although he could at this time read but little, he gladly purchased a copy of the Gospel according to St. John, and when he reached home, he slowly and with great pains committed to memory the characters of the first chapter. This portion he read and re-read until he knew it off by heart. But, not content to eat his morsel alone, he secured the interest of an old friend named Kwoh, an inveterate gambler, and together they spent many hours poring over the pages of the book.

A few weeks after Elder Chang had returned to Taning, Mr. Albert Lutley,[1] a young worker who had been only some fourteen months in China, visited Kichow with a view to arranging for the necessary repairs to the premises rented. As it did not appear wise at that stage to take up residence immediately, he continued his journey farther south, visiting the towns and villages of Hotsin and Hanchenghsien. Even when the property at Kichow was ready for occupation, he left the work in the city largely in the hands of a trusted Chinese, while he engaged in almost ceaseless itinerations throughout the surrounding country. These journeys extended over an area of some two hundred miles from north to south and one hundred and twenty miles from east to west. Throughout all this district Scripture portions and tracts were sold, while sheet-tracts and posters were carefully pasted up in conspicuous places, such as the gateways of

[1] Now and for many years superintendent of the China Inland Mission in the greater part of the province, to whom the writer is indebted for invaluable help in the preparation of this story.

the towns and villages. In addition, the Gospel was preached wherever opportunity afforded.

What such itinerating work meant among those hills may in part, but in part only, be gathered from the following extract from one of Mr. Lutley's diaries written at a somewhat later period :

On Tuesday we had hoped to leave again for Kichow and Hotsin, as we had arranged to reach the latter place on Friday, if possible, to attend their Native Conference. This had been fixed for Saturday and Sunday, but the river was so swollen that we felt it wise not to attempt to cross it; later in the day we were sorry to learn that two men had been drowned in attempting to cross, in the very place we should have had to go over.

The next morning, the river having abated several inches, we hired two men to help us over and started for Kichow, but, although the water had gone down considerably, we still found when we got into the middle of the stream, that the stones in the bottom of the river were all moving, being carried down by the current. It was, therefore, very difficult to get a good foothold, and to stop or hesitate for a moment would have been fatal. We were very thankful that we had not attempted it the previous day.

Having crossed this river safely, we did not anticipate any further serious difficulty; but we had only gone five *li* when we came to another river, and here we found that the ordinary ford had become a deep hole; so we thought it best not to attempt to cross over. We therefore took a small footpath by the side of the rocks, and in this way, with difficulty, we managed to get fifteen *li* without crossing. After this there was no road whatever, as the river ran against the base of a

rock, which rose up perpendicularly to about 100 feet. We *must* therefore cross the river.

After a little prayer together that the Lord would guide us over, I went first, to find the shallowest place, for Mr. Chang, who is an elderly man, to follow with the donkey. I got across safely, but, finding the bank difficult for the donkey to mount, I returned to the middle of the stream and tried to find another place where the donkey could get over. I was getting along all right until within a yard or two of the bank, when I suddenly found myself in deep water and was carried off my feet. By throwing myself forward on the water, however, I managed to grasp the grass on the bank and pulled myself out. The next time I was more successful, and found a place with a gravel bottom. Here, by one of us holding the donkey's head and the other his tail, we got over without further accident.

It was now raining heavily and blowing a cold wind, so that Mr. Chang was shaking with the cold, and I was wet through from head to foot. Still, as there was no village or shelter at hand, we pressed on another three or four *li* to the next crossing, in order to reach a village on the other side of the river. When we arrived at this ford we found the current so swift that it was not possible to cross without help. Seeing an old shepherd and several boys on the other side of the river hurrying home with their cows and donkeys, we shouted to them to get us some help, but they took no notice, except to say the crossing was farther up the stream.

After vainly trying several times to find a fordable place, we were obliged to retrace our steps about five *li*, until we found a small path leading up the side of the hill. We then determined that, as it was impossible to go along the valley, we would try to reach a small road

leading along the top of the hill, and thus avoid crossing the river. We had not gone far, however, before we came to clay soil, and as the path was so steep and the road so slippery with the rain, neither men nor animal could keep their feet. Then commenced a series of experiences of which I have scarcely had the equal in China. Several times we feared we might lose our animal and all our things over a precipice, but the angel of the Lord protected us. That morning, before leaving Taning, we read together with the Christians Psalm xci., and verses 11 and 12 had come home to my heart with power and comfort such as I had never known before. Throughout the whole day these verses kept speaking to me, and were turned into prayer and thanksgiving.

To turn again to our story. During a subsequent visit to Kichow Mr. Tan was brought into touch with Mr. Lutley, and, becoming more deeply interested in the importance of the Gospel message, he determined to enter the opium refuge and break off the evil habit of opium smoking as soon as the harvest was gathered in. Sickness and unexpected difficulties at home, however, made this impossible, but he continued diligently to study his copy of the Gospel. The more he read, the more he longed to be free from his bondage. He tried at first to reduce the quantity of opium smoked, hoping in this way gradually to secure deliverance, but he suffered great physical and mental anguish in the process. Nevertheless, whenever the cravings came upon him he would kneel and pray until the painful spasms had passed.

One day, as he was reading the fifteenth chapter

of the Gospel—St. John's—although he did not know the Chinese character for "Vine," the Spirit of God so illuminated his mind that he perceived the vital importance of union with Christ. There and then, by faith, he entered into living fellowship with his Lord and Master, and soon after this he gained complete deliverance from the craving without even entering the opium refuge.

In the autumn of 1890, Mr. Lutley, this time accompanied by Pastor Ch'ü and a Christian servant, visited Hotsin again with the express purpose of preaching the Gospel to the large crowds attending the annual fair. Day after day the preaching continued in an open space where the people could gather, and several thousands of Gospels and tracts were sold. At the close of a long and somewhat exhausting day towards the end of the fair they had returned to their inn, thoroughly ready for a good night's rest, when a man, in a state of great excitement, suddenly burst into the room and greeted them with much warmth. This proved to be none other than farmer Tan, who, having heard in his own village ten miles away that there were two preachers in the city at the fair, had hurried in to see them. So great was the change and improvement in the man's appearance that Mr. Lutley did not at first recognise him. Instead of a thin, sallow opium-smoker, here was a well-favoured man with a good colour and full of vitality. A few minutes' conversation, however, sufficed to convince the preachers that the change in appearance was only the outward manifestation of a greater change of heart and manner of life. Without fully realising all that had

transpired, the man had evidently passed from death unto life, and was now a new creature in Christ.

After explaining the reason why he had been unable to come to the opium refuge as he had intended and promised, he told them of the way in which God had delivered him in his own home. He then asked for a copy of St. John's Gospel, receiving which he eagerly turned up passage after passage which had perplexed him, and sought explanations and help. One of these passages was that containing the story of the man born blind, who, on his confession of Christ, had been turned out of the synagogue. Now in Chinese the same character is used for " synagogue " as for " church," and not knowing anything about the Jewish synagogue as distinguished from the Christian church, he had been greatly puzzled to understand why any one should have been expelled from the church because he professed faith in Christ.

From this time onward Mr. Tan became a zealous witness for his Master, and although at this time he met with considerable opposition in his own home, he was used of God to lead his whole family to Christ. Later on idolatry was swept away entirely from the whole village. The village temple was pulled down and the materials used for the building of a Christian church. But his influence was by no means limited to his own people, for not a few other towns and hamlets first heard from him the story of Christ's love.

In 1891 Mr. Lutley was joined at Kichow by Mr. George M'Connell. During the following year eight men and women were baptized in the stream

DEACON T'AN.

The first Christian in Hotsin.

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which flows near the foot of the hill south of the city, and a little church was established. Among these early converts was Chang Fuh-teh, the Buddhist devotee, who heard the Gospel from Elder Chang as already recorded.

Another was Mrs. Chia, who for many years had been possessed by an evil spirit, and had been a terror to all her neighbours. Though much addicted to opium, she was enabled to give this up, and in answer to prayer was delivered from the evil spirit. Although she was well advanced in life, being fifty-six years of age, she learned to read the New Testament, and for several years it was her custom to memorise six new verses of Scripture each week. She established a weekly cottage prayer meeting in her home, and was most zealous in seeking to win others for Christ. She also willingly endured much ridicule and scorn by being one of the first women in the district to unbind her crippled feet and adopt a larger shoe.

Farmer Tan was also among those baptized at this time, as was also his friend Kwoh, the ex-gambler, who since his conversion had endured much persecution. Earnestly Mr. Tan urged upon Mr. Lutley the advisability of opening a station at Hotsin, but in consequence of strong anti-foreign opposition this was not then possible. Premises were, however, secured in the Hwang village some five miles distant from the city, and here Mr. M'Connell lived until in 1893 property was rented outside the city, though only on payment of the rent for many years in advance.

From Hotsin the work spread across the Yellow

River as far as Hanchenghsien in the neighbouring province of Shensi, some thirty or forty miles away, while other centres were opened to the Gospel. The limits of our story, however, will not allow us to follow developments beyond the areas already mentioned, namely, from Siaoyi in the north, where Ch'ü had been instrumental in sowing the first seeds of truth, to Hotsin in the south. Throughout this mountainous tract of country, roughly some seven or eight thousand square miles in area, the Gospel message won its widening way. Great developments had taken place from that day fifteen years before, when Chang, the Buddhist bishop, and Ch'ü, the Confucian scholar, had first begun their study of the Gospel according to Mark.

XV

DEVELOPMENTS AT TANING

A common life in Christ is the strongest bond of all for those who are conscious of it. And that bond was at its strongest in the times when Christians were made, not born.—H. M. GWATKIN.

UP to this point we have been concerned with the beginnings of a story, about which there is always something peculiarly fascinating. Like childhood, the study of beginnings has a charm of its own, but it will not be possible to follow the growth and maturity of the work in this one corner of God's vineyard with the same detail with which we have recorded the planting of the early seed. History must inevitably be foreshortened, problems must be simplified, and developments recorded with an economy of words. We therefore propose in this chapter to state in brief outline the progress at Taning during the next ten years.

More than twelve months after Messrs. Cassels and Beauchamp had left for West China, the Misses Scott and Miles, as already mentioned, settled in the city of Taning, the first of many ladies to reside at this centre.[1] They were delighted with the warmth of their welcome, with the simplicity of

[1] They arrived on December 8, 1887.

the life of the people, and with the loving and intimate way in which Pastor Ch'ü and Elder Chang lived and laboured. It was not long before they began to find their way into the homes and into the hearts of the people, and they early recognised the difficulties and persecutions which those who confessed their faith in Christ had to encounter. Two or three extracts from the diaries of these ladies will best picture to the reader the conditions of the work at this time. Under date of March 30, 1888, Miss Miles wrote:

"Last Friday at midnight an ox was sacrificed at the city temple in honour of Confucius, and all the scholars were expected to assemble and join in the idolatrous rites. For some weeks back we have had two bright young students coming to hear the Gospel, and one of them destroyed the idols in his home. They told us they did not intend to go to the sacrifice; would we pray for them. They were quite prepared to be beaten, knowing how much the mandarin here dislikes foreigners and all who have to do with them. After going to bed I lay awake thinking of these two men and asking God to protect them. Several crackers had been fired off, and soon a great bang sounded and re-echoed through the hills. A few minutes after, these two men, who were in the kitchen with our servants, sang, "Onward go," and then after prayer sang again, "Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus." It does show the reality of a man's faith when he is willing to suffer persecution for the sake of his Master."

Nearly a month later Miss Scott wrote:

"Last Thursday Yang came back from the village, where he had accompanied our cured opium patient, with the good news that he had had the joy of destroying her idols and those of her neighbour. . . . On Friday another opium patient's husband came, and as they both gave us their pipes, and as the first man who came some time ago and is now almost well, gave us his too, we had a bonfire in the courtyard, and the three pipes were vigorously smashed with a small axe, and then thrown into the fire."

A year later Miss Miles wrote again, this time from the village of Mulberry Crag:

"We are on a visit to Pastor Ch'ü's dear old mother, one of the nicest and truest gentlewomen in China. We started on Monday after a heavy Sunday's work at Taning and arrived here at sunset. The scenery all along is just a continuation of Taning, but the river here is beautiful and in some places grand. We felt much encouraged as we came along to notice how the Lord was working in the villages around. . . .

"Several came to worship the night we arrived, but next morning we had a good number of women, and in the afternoon went out to visit, Pastor Ch'ü and the Elder leading the way. After going to the houses of two Christian families, he went to see a poor old lady of seventy-nine; she lives with a niece who looks nearly as old as herself. These two have heard the Gospel often but have never given up their idols. When we went they had a coloured clay image outside their door and two paper shrines inside, and besides these there were two branches of the thorn tree ornamented with

cakes made in the shape of serpents, mice, frogs, and dragons, etc., and stuck on the thorns; these, the Pastor said, had to do with idolatrous rites. I sat beside the old woman and held her hand and made her say several times after me, 'Jesus loves me and gave His life for me,' and then the Elder told her that Jesus and devil were so unlike that she could not have the truth in her heart and the idols in her home. So, to our delight, we saw the paper pulled from the walls and burned and the clay image destroyed.

"Last night there were thirty people at worship and several children. . . . As we came home we went down to the river and looked at a temple near where the Elder used to live. This temple has seventy big clay images and the dear old man told us how he used to dust and sweep and keep them clean. He showed us his courtyard, now in ruins, and the theatre stage which is not now in use. This village has suffered much from the famine. Formerly there were over seventy families, now there are about twenty-three. Of these ten are Christians, so that the travelling theatricals do not find it worth their while to come."

After some further account of the generous hospitality they received from the people, the writer continues:

"We are so delighted with all the simplicity we see around us, the natural way in which the pastor helps to carry water, etc. The little children seem to have a particularly happy time here, and it is delightful to hear them answering the pastor's questions at the evening worship. I do not think

well-taught English boys would do better, for they had nearly every incident in the life of the Lord Jesus at their finger-tips. Pastor Ch'ü thinks the fact of asking questions keeps up the interest and makes the people more sure of their ground. He said yesterday that every Chinese scholar must be well acquainted with Confucian books, and, of course, every Christian must know his Bible. . . . We feel it to be a great privilege to claim these dear Christians as friends. The Elder is like a father to us, and took such pleasure and pride in showing us the beauties of river and landscape."

In another letter written eighteen months later, in the autumn of 1889, we have another glimpse of the difficulties which confronted the work.

"I think," wrote Miss Miles, "some of you may remember the young scholar named Wang who was baptized here last summer. The head magistrate had several times tried to get him into trouble and has at last succeeded. It appears that some of his relatives have not paid their taxes and so the mandarin seized the opportunity and made poor young Wang responsible. He could not manage to pay more than his own taxes and so he was beaten. The petty spite and deep hatred of this official came out when Wang was being beaten, as he shouted, 'Beat the foreigner, beat the foreigner,' by which he meant the man who had joined the foreign religion. Elder Chang says there is nothing against this young man's character except that he is a follower of Jesus."

Miss Scott, writing somewhat later, adds:

"Most of the city people seem dreadfully in-

different to the Gospel, except perhaps the chief mandarin, who still tries to persecute the Christians whenever he can rake up or invent the least excuse. Only a few days ago he caused a young scholar to be cruelly beaten on the hand, for no fault of his own, but on the pretext that some distant relations could not pay their taxes."

In 1890, three years after the arrival of the Misses Scott and Miles, Elder Chang was set apart as Pastor of the Taning Church, and Pastor Ch'ü began to devote himself more and more to the development of the work in other parts of his extensive parish. The principle of self-support was from the first kept well to the fore, and, apart from a small sum of about £3 per annum received from the Mission funds, Pastor Ch'ü was supported by the Christians. As is the case with so many Chinese leaders, he at first had considerable diffidence in receiving money from the Chinese Church, fearing that this might embarrass him in his duties as a pastor should he be called upon to rebuke sin.

Though what immediately follows relates to a later date, this is perhaps the best place to mention a somewhat novel and interesting method adopted by this Church for raising funds. At the autumn Church Conference in 1909, much enthusiasm was created by a proposal made by one of the members. It was suggested that those who were able should give a sheep to the Church in addition to their ordinary contributions, and that the sheep thus given should be known as the Lord's flock. All profits from this flock were to be devoted to the Lord's work alone. The idea was taken up heartily

and within a short time seventeen sheep were promised, which it was agreed should be handed over to the Church with their seventeen lambs.

The women and girls, not to be outdone, promised to give hens and to sell all the eggs they laid for the same purpose. During the following year more sheep were given, the Lord's flock being then brought up to fifty-one sheep and lambs.

In one particular the work at Taning suffered considerably, and that was in the many changes in the personnel of the lady workers. While all stations in the mission field suffer more or less through changes in the foreign staff, especially in a growing mission, this is particularly the case in a station staffed by lady workers. From the arrival of the Misses Scott and Miles in 1887 to the Boxer crisis in 1900, a period of thirteen years, no fewer than twelve lady workers resided for longer or shorter periods at Taning, eight of these leaving for marriage to missionaries located at other centres,[1] while three suffered martyrdom in 1900.

The Church during these years of change continued to make encouraging progress in knowledge, zeal, and numbers. It is even possible that the very changes made the Christians in some ways more self-reliant. In addition to assisting liberally in the support of their pastor, the Church sent out

[1] Miss Mary Scott (Mrs. A. Orr-Ewing), Miss Miles (Mrs. Hudson Broomhall), Miss Doggett (Mrs. I'Anson), Miss Gillam (Mrs. Eyres), Miss Broomhall (Mrs. D. E. Hoste), Miss Edith Broomhall (Mrs. Ritchie), Miss Roberts (Mrs. Lutley), Miss F. Corderoy (Mrs. Marshall Broomhall). Miss Edith Nathan, Miss M. R. Nathan, and Miss Mary Heaysman suffered martyrdom there in 1900.

during the winter months, when agricultural work was slack, a band of eight or ten evangelists, that these men might, two by two, visit the surrounding towns and villages. Further, some of the Christians promised a certain number of days for voluntary preaching in other centres. In the fuller organisation of the Church, Mr. Yang, who had at the first helped Mr. Cassels, and Messrs. Li and Wang were set apart as deacons. These men, especially Yang and Li, greatly helped Pastor Chang in the arduous task of visiting the Christians and enquirers living in the scattered and distant hamlets. They also exercised a powerful influence not only in the Church but among the heathen by their ministry of prayer for the sick and for those afflicted with demon possession. One incident may be recorded to illustrate their simple and effective faith in prayer and the way in which new centres were opened.

Deacon Wang and a Mr. Yü had been sent by Pastor Chang to open up work in the adjoining county of Yungho, the pastor's purpose being to commence opium refuge work in the town of Sangpi, and from that place, as centre, to evangelise the surrounding villages. Now these two men were both simple and illiterate farmers, but they were filled with love to the Lord and a passion for the souls of men. For several weeks they held on their way, meeting, however, with much discouragement, for everybody stood aloof and treated them with suspicion.

After six weeks of such treatment, only one patient having entered the refuge during this period, they found all their money exhausted. Mr. Yü

therefore returned to Taning to seek the pastor's advice, which was that it would be best to close the premises down and come home. When Deacon Wang heard this decision he was much cast down and said that he really could not return until some one had believed the Gospel. He therefore obtained a supply of coarse flour and a few hundred cash from his own people, when he and Mr. Yü set apart the whole of Sunday for fasting and prayer. From Saturday to Monday no food passed their lips, while they pleaded with God to give them some souls before they returned home.

The very next day a farmer arrived from a village about three miles distant asking for some medicine for his nephew who was dangerously ill. Wang and his friend expressed their sympathy with the farmer, but explained that they only had anti-opium medicine, and, moreover, were not skilled in the treatment of other maladies. They offered, however, to pray for the lad if the farmer would kneel with them. When they had explained what prayer was and had spoken of Christ's love and power, saying that life and death were in His hands, the man willingly consented. Together they knelt down and pleaded for the life of the child, and when the farmer reached home he was astonished and delighted to find the lad already better. He thereupon related to the parents of the boy and other members of his family his experiences, how he had met with the two Christians from Taning and how they had prayed to one named Jesus Christ for the life of the child.

So deeply impressed was the father of the sick

lad that on the morrow he set off to find Mr. Wang himself and to inform him of his son's recovery, as well as to enquire more carefully concerning this new teaching. The result was that Deacon Wang and his companion were invited to come to his home and expound the truth to his household. To this invitation they responded with alacrity and thanksgiving, with a result that the whole family received the message of salvation, destroyed their idols, and established Christian worship. Subsequently both brothers, their wives, and other members of the family were baptized and a little church established in this new centre.

But though the Word of the Lord thus prevailed, the Church was not free from persecution. One instance which had far-reaching effects must suffice by way of illustration. In 1898 several Confucian graduates declared their faith in Christ and joined the Taning Church. This raised bitter opposition on the part of a Mr. Ho, one of the most influential and able men of the district. Of the new converts two came from Mr. Ho's own village, one of them being his nephew and pupil and the other a descendant of a family held in great repute by the Buddhists, the corpse of one having been actually encased within an idol and worshipped. Exercising his authority as teacher and uncle and head of the clan, he gathered together the other members of the clan and had his nephew beaten, and when the youth refused to recant he threatened to kill him. So bitter was Mr. Ho that the young man dared not go out save under cover of darkness.

The next step in the process of persecution was

that Mr. Ho gave orders that the two Christian families should be denied the use of the village well, and to enforce this order a watch was set day and night. As there was no other water supply the Christians and their cattle were, amid the jeers and curses of their persecutors, literally starved out of the village, and when the matter was referred to the chief official of the county he not only declined to interfere but had both men beaten. Pastor Chang and some of the Christians thereupon appealed to a higher court, with the result that Mr. Ho was rebuked and fined and the two families restored to their ancestral homes. It was not long, however, ere this enemy of Christ found an opportunity of revenge, for early in 1900 the whole district fell into the hands of the Boxers. The details of his conduct at that time and of the fiery trial generally must, however, be reserved for a later chapter in order that we may first follow the developments of the work in the other stations both north and south of Taning.

XVI

PROGRESS AT THE OTHER CENTRES

Just because the Gospel was personal, it never stopped at the individual. It was a social power from the very first, for the power which claimed the whole man had to cleanse all the relations of life.—H. M. GWATKIN.

WHILE the work at Taning continued to flourish, for some reason the neighbouring city of Sichow proved to be a more barren field. In the early days of their service Mr. and Mrs. William Key, and Miss Kerr who worked for some time at the out-station Kehcheng, had the joy of receiving new converts. In this work they were ably assisted by Pastor Ch'ü, who in his bright and earnest manner would preach the Gospel in the streets as well as visit the shops throughout the city. And when the students came up from the hsien districts for the examinations he as a successful graduate laid himself out to get in touch with them. Yet in spite of all the love and labour bestowed upon this district, Sichow proved to be one of the hardest stations in the south of the province. For two whole years there were no baptisms, and the number of church members actually began to decline through death and other causes.

In July 1891 a heavy blow fell upon this district in the death of Mrs. Key from acute dysentery. Within one brief year she buried her little son and then her baby daughter, whom the Chinese called "Comfort," and then in the midst of her labours she herself took sick and died. During her years of service she had, Miss Kerr wrote, "never changed except in earnestness and increased devotion. Poor Sichow may long wait till it sees such another embodiment of the love and patience of Christ in its midst."

In consequence of this bereavement Mr. and Mrs. Peat were subsequently appointed to take charge of the work, and remained at Sichow until their martyrdom in 1900. During these years, in spite of many discouragements and not a few difficulties, there were not lacking signs of a real work of grace. In 1892 the first Sichow convert, a Mr. Chao, was called home to his reward. For some time he had been very ill and quite blind, and though all this while he was seriously persecuted by his heathen wife, who appeared utterly careless as to whether he lived or died, he witnessed a good confession up to the very end.

Another convert named Tsao was also a cause for much rejoicing. Formerly he had been a well-to-do merchant, but through opium smoking had been reduced to a state of great poverty. He eventually entered the opium refuge at Kehcheng, with a result that he not only gained freedom from the degrading habit but also learned what it was to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made him free. One of the first great tests of his sincerity came in the matter of the Sabbath. Though his

master was a kind-hearted man and occasionally allowed him to attend the Sunday services, he would not grant him full liberty in this matter, but through faithful and conscientious service Tsao eventually became a partner in the business and at once set aside the whole of the Lord's Day for worship and Christian service.

The business was that of a general store, so that among the articles sold were incense, paper money, and other idolatrous paraphernalia. Against the sale of these things Tsao was now free to take his stand. At first he declined to accept any portion of the profits accruing from that department, but finally he closed down that section of the trade. In these and other ways he sought to live according to his profession, and the God who prospered Potiphar on account of Joseph prospered not only Tsao but his partner, so that the turnover of their business doubled.

Another convert who was much used in the Sichow district was a man named Shang-teh. This man had in an unusual degree the gift of speech, with great power of illustration, combined with a keen sense of humour. When preaching they of "a contrary sort" found it hard to gainsay or resist him. He had in his unregenerate days devoted himself heart and soul to gambling and to other worldly pleasures. After his conversion the same thoroughness characterised him as a witness for Christ. Some of his experiences were of a most remarkable nature and so powerfully convinced his relations and friends that they renounced idolatry and became earnest seekers after the truth.

One of these relations was an uncle who lived two or three miles from Shang-teh's home. The event which led his uncle to put away his idols was related by the Chinese as follows. Shang-teh's uncle was the owner of a good many sheep, a considerable number of which had been seized by a strange and fatal malady which the people attributed to evil spirits. When Shang-teh accompanied his uncle to the fold he found the flock in a great state of unrest, the sheep constantly crying out as though in great pain. Occasionally one of the sheep, without any premonitory symptoms, would leap into the air several times and then suddenly fall down dead.

The uncle, at his wits' end, had determined to resort to the usual methods of exorcising evil spirits, and in the depth of the night he and several of his household, after reverently worshipping the household gods, proceeded with rushlights and a goodly supply of incense and paper money to a certain spot to propitiate the demons. Shang-teh, as a Christian, earnestly sought to dissuade them, but when he found that all entreaties were in vain he said, "Very well, you go on with your exorcisings but I will go and pray to the true God."

The company separated, each party seeking a chosen spot for their respective worship. Suddenly and quite unexpectedly a storm arose, extinguishing the rushlights and drenching the incense and paper money, so that it was impossible to use them as intended. Meanwhile Shang-teh continued in prayer and, according to the testimony of Shang-teh himself and of his sceptical friends, he was for a brief space of time enveloped in a bright light which shone out

in what was otherwise a dark and starless night. By this light indeed he was revealed to his friends, who, some way off, had been frustrated in their idolatrous proceedings. The flame was but of momentary duration—all was darkness again. Scared by this strange sight, his friends stumbled as fast as they could in the darkness to where Shang-teh was kneeling, expecting to find him burnt or injured. They found him, however, happy and peaceful; neither his clothes nor hair showed any signs of fire, and, stranger still, his clothes, which before had been drenched with rain, had become perfectly dry, while theirs were wet.

Whatever this phenomenon may have been—and we make no attempt to explain it—it sufficed to convince Shang-teh's friends of their error and of the truth of Shang-teh's faith. Returning home they found silence and apparent health reigning in the fold where but recently there had been continuous bleating, unrest, and death. Such an experience not unnaturally became the talk of the neighbourhood, and had a remarkable effect upon the village folk. Through the influence and testimony of this man, one family after another turned from idols to serve God, both in and around his village, while finally his fellow-villagers invited Mr. Peat to come and witness the destruction of the large, life-sized images in the village temple—twenty or thirty in all—valued at a considerable sum of money. This story is best told in Mr. Peat's own words:

"They were very solidly built, and even with four pickaxes at work, it took quite a time to destroy them all; and, though winter, the farmers were

perspiring before they were finished. It gave great delight to the little children to see their parents throw the great, big, ugly-faced dragon god over the precipice into the river bed. Some pleaded for the dragon god's throne to be preserved for the children to play in, but this proposal was rejected by the majority, who wanted to destroy every vestige of idolatry, and so the beautiful red and gilt solid wooden throne, with its carrying poles, was broken to pieces for firewood.

"The usual brazen mirrors were found in the hearts of the principal idols, and they were eagerly carried off by the children, and soon after were being used as gongs by the merry youngsters, who, I expect, will never forget that red-letter day, when the idols they had formerly been taught to fear and worship were reduced to the mud of which they had originally been formed.

"The Chinese calendars tied round the centre pole of each idol showed them to belong to the times of the Emperors K'ang-Hsi and Hsien-Feng, that is the period extending from A.D. 1662 to A.D. 1851. There were Buddhas, dragon-gods, hill-gods, goddesses of mercy, etc., etc. The same day we had the joy of destroying the household gods of a family in a village farther out, where were two young men, earnest Buddhist devotees. God has used in this wonderful movement a rough diamond indeed, but that Shang-teh is one of the Lord's chosen vessels we are more and more convinced.

"As a heathen man, his history is a very remarkable one of deeds of noble doings for the good of his fellow-men, and though of very rough, unpolished

exterior, a kinder-hearted man it were difficult to find. In his younger days, when a shepherd, he chased a wolf for miles to rescue from its jaws a neighbour's child that had been carried off from his village, and after an exciting chase, in which he lost his shoes and had to run barefoot over the rough mountain roads, he succeeded in rescuing the child alive. Holding the precious burden in his arms, he kicked at the wolf with his bare feet, and the wolf, afraid to make an attack on such a fearless deliverer, beat a retreat. Benighted, tired, and far from home, Shang-teh put up at the nearest village for the night, mothering as best he could the frightened little child. Search-parties from the home-village failed to discover the child, and on finding Shang-teh's shoes by the wayside, concluded that both the child and the young shepherd had perished. Shang-teh—up before daylight—reached the village early in the day, to find all confusion and wailing over the supposed dead ones, one of the villagers having owned that he had seen the wolf carry off what he thought was a sucking-pig. Imagine the surprise of every one when Shang-teh marched triumphantly in with the child and restored it to the mother, smiling through her tears."

Such were some of the early converts at Sichow.

At Siaoyi the work had been carried on by Miss Whitchurch and Miss Seed with unremitting energy and the keenest devotion. Within two years of their entry into the district, all the villages within a radius of five miles of the city had been visited, and scores of families had put away their idols. The diaries of Miss Whitchurch, which the writer

has read, bear witness to the love and self-sacrifice which these ladies expended upon the people. In encouraging the enquirers to destroy their idols, Miss Whitchurch was especially zealous, and whenever requests came for help and prayer in regard to sickness—and these were frequent—the removal of every vestige of idolatry was insisted upon before she would come and implore God's blessing.

In 1891 Miss Seed was married to Mr. Russell, and together they continued to render valuable assistance until their removal to another post in 1893. They were followed by Mr. and Mrs. I'anson for about two years, and then Miss Searell joined Miss Whitchurch and worked with her until the Boxer persecution, when they were both murdered.

During all these years, Miss Whitchurch, assisted by Pastor Ch'ü, Deacon Heh, and others, engaged in a devoted and systematic evangelisation of the district, during which time many persons, even heathen men and women as well as the Christian converts, were induced to memorise whole chapters from the Gospels. In company with a Biblewoman, Miss Whitchurch was in the habit of attending the various market towns, where she engaged a room in an inn. Here in her own hired quarters she would receive hundreds of women when they attended the local fair or market. Work was also developed in other cities, Wenshui, thirty miles to the north, being opened as an out-station, while converts were gathered in the district of Yungning, seventy miles to the west, which city was opened later as a central station. The question of self-support was ever kept before the Christians, and

they undertook to support a Biblewoman, and in conjunction with Taning, Sichow, and Kichow they agreed to be responsible for Pastor Ch'ü's stipend.

Opium refuge work, both for men and women, was energetically engaged in, and all patients were expected to memorise Christian hymns and verses of Scripture daily. In this way many obtained a considerable knowledge of the way of salvation. Into the midst of all these activities, at a time when there was much promise of a considerable ingathering, the Boxer persecution suddenly burst, with such consequences as will be related later.

But we must not attempt to follow in more detail the growth of the work throughout this district. In a little more than twenty years the story of Christ's love had been extensively preached throughout all this part of the province, and some 459 persons had been added to the Church in that area covered by our story. Of this number 213 were attached to the Taning Church, 104 to Siaoyi, 89 to Sichow, 30 to Kichow, and 25 to Hotsin.

These figures do not represent by any means all that had been accomplished. Little churches had been established in other centres, as, for instance, at Hanchenghsien in Shensi, where twenty-one converts had been gathered in, and in Yungning-chow and Linhsien, which were more fully organised in later days. There were also many hundreds of earnest enquirers, and a still larger number of more or less interested persons throughout the district, but the whole of this work was to pass through one of the most fiery periods of persecution ever experienced by the Church of God in any age.

XVII

A GREAT CONFLICT OF SUFFERING

Christianity was not set on the throne of the world as a matter of course, but had formidable powers arrayed against it and fought its way through conflicts as arduous as any that history records.—H. M. GWATKIN.

IN the early spring of 1900 the district west of the Fen River, in common with the whole of the province and many other parts of China, began to be gradually disturbed by bands of men who professed to be spirit mediums. These men quickly gathered around them large numbers of lads, whom they instructed in certain pseudo-religious practices and incantations, by means of which they appeared to become possessed by a spirit, and were thereupon declared invulnerable against sword or bullet. In this state they would fall to the ground in a kind of frenzy, after which they became filled with a senseless hatred of all things foreign or Christian.

This was a part of that great Boxer outburst which was shortly to stagger the world. This movement was a strange medley of anti-foreign feeling and of Taoist superstition. Had not Macao been taken by the Portuguese, Hongkong by the British, and now Formosa by the Japanese? Had

not China been robbed of her suzerainty over Korea, and was she not losing her rights in Manchuria? Had not the three invaluable harbours of Kiaochow, Port Arthur, and Wei-hai-wei been taken from China, and were not the foreign barbarians actually talking about the partition of the Empire? Such things were intolerable.

And now the nation was threatened by famine, which was a sure sign of Heaven's displeasure and a call to the people to rise and rid themselves of the hated alien. Had they not proved that the foreigners poisoned their wells, stole their children, and used their eyes for making photographic materials? With such and worse rumours firmly believed by the people, and with the officials and gentry angered by the facts of foreign aggression, there were present all the elements of a great popular uprising. So the officials joined hand in hand with the common and ignorant populace in frenzied outburst. The superstitious mind of the people was ready soil for the wildest beliefs.

Taoism, which in its beginnings had had many lofty ideals, had degenerated until it stooped to the lowest forms of satanic spiritism and magic. What with official encouragement and a superstitious people, the masses were soon filled with an abject terror and a wild frenzy. Believing that the Boxer leaders could actually make them invulnerable, crowds of credulous youths flocked to the standard of the patriotic volunteer movement. These candidates were made to face the south-east, their feet were set upon a sign of the cross, and then they were urged to look through two circles formed by

the uniting of the fourth finger and thumb of each hand. The leader would then whisper alternately in each ear, "Strike heaven and heaven's door opens." Slowly the mesmeric spell worked, until the youth, thoroughly hypnotised, fell back in a trance. He was then asked of what spirit he was. If he replied, "The god of war," he was then regarded as a medium of that spirit or of any other as the case might be. He would then utter unearthly yells, calling out, "Slay, slay; kill, kill; burn, burn the foreigner." In this way recruits by the thousand were gained to the ranks of the so-called invincible, invulnerable army. Encouraged by the Empress Dowager and by those in highest authority, there was no limit and no restraint upon the wickedness they might commit. It will readily be imagined that when frenzied bands of men possessed with such satanic designs came among these western hills, the Christians were seized with serious concern. Escape was impossible. As the foreigners were the chief objects of hatred, the native Christians, for their own sakes as well as for the missionaries', advised them to hide. At Taning the three ladies, Miss Nathan, her sister May, with Miss Mary Heaysman, accompanied by a servant and teacher, sought refuge in a secluded cave among the hills. Here day after day passed in a painful suspense, hoping against hope that God would deliver them, as their diaries subsequently revealed.

But one day, after the Mission premises had been looted and robbed, their faithful servant was caught when returning from taking them food supplies. On the pain of death, the Boxers de-

manded that he should divulge the whereabouts of the foreign ladies; but this he steadily refused to do, preferring rather to suffer the penalty of death, as he did, than betray his best friends. But though every effort was made to keep the hiding-place of the ladies secret, they were at length trapped and discovered by the tireless ingenuity of their haters, and then, through the malicious influences of the persecutor Ho, mentioned in a previous chapter, they were all cruelly put to death on the banks of the little river that skirts the city. Like their Master, they died outside the gate bearing His reproach. To those who knew how friendly many of the Taning people had been, such a brutal deed seemed almost incredible.

But this was not all. Two missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Ogren and their child, had escaped from Yungningchow in the north and crossed the Yellow River into Shensi, but falling into the hands of evil men, they were compelled to recross the river near Taning. Here they were dragged before the Boxer chief, who condemned Mr. Ogren to death. The record of suffering which follows is altogether beyond words. Though he was terribly cut about the head with a sword, he managed in his agony to spring from the hands of his would-be murderers, jump into the river, and under cover of darkness escape. Next morning he was found by Deacon Wang, who bound up his fearful wounds and ministered to his needs. Hearing, however, that his wife and child had been cast into prison, his love for them compelled him to return to the city to rejoin them. Here in a dark cell, he in his terribly wounded

condition, deprived of almost every necessary of comfort and cleanliness, became delirious, while his brave wife, with a breaking heart and suffering soul, could do little more than cry to God for aid.

Mrs. Ogren, unable to control her husband in his wild deliriums, was compelled to call in other prisoners to bind his hands and lash him to the bed. "God only knows," she afterwards wrote, "the horror and the misery of those hours. Here lay my poor husband, who had lately been so strong and cheerful, there was our baby, the picture of health and the admiration of all when we left our home, now a living skeleton, and I—well was it for me that I could not see my own face, for surely there would have been little comfort in the sight. My cup of suffering was now full to overflowing."

But we cannot continue this story, though they lived through the worst fury of the storm, and news from the outside world raised their hopes of deliverance. Mr. Ogren died on the way to the coast, while the sorrowing widow and fatherless child were finally saved.

As for the Christians, they in their turn suffered severely. In nearly every case their homes were robbed and plundered, and those who escaped death only did so by flight. Pastor Ch'ü, after wandering from place to place, lived for some time in a cave close by a stream, subsisting on a supply of millet he had carried thence. Subsequently he was hidden by a friendly heathen until the dangers were past, and good is it to relate that this friend found his reward by being himself brought to Christ through

Pastor Ch'ü's influence during this period of confinement.

Pastor Chang also escaped and hid for several weeks, but as his son was captured and his life was threatened unless he revealed his father's whereabouts, the Pastor, with characteristic affection, speedily surrendered himself at the Boxer headquarters. It was then that his love and kindness to the people stood him in good stead. As Buddhist priest he had gained a great reputation through his knowledge of drugs, and since he had become a Christian he had rendered help and relief to not a few in their hours of need. The result was that when it became known that he had surrendered himself to the Boxers, a deputation composed of many of the leading gentry approached the Boxer chief and pleaded for his life, and in this they were supported by a large number of the people.

Meanwhile the Boxer leaders tried and condemned him to death, purposing to execute him at midnight. When tidings of this became known, the deputation again urged that he be spared, and finally, to the surprise and anger of many of the persecutors, their chief commuted the death sentence to a heavy fine. Pastor Chang, thinking that they had mistaken him for a rich man and only purposed to fleece him before taking his life, protested that he had neither property nor money. His friends, however, urged him to agree, and several came forward and offered to be sureties. To his great surprise, he was set at liberty.

Sad to say, however, long after all personal danger was past, Pastor Chang was persuaded by

the local official to accept a recantation token. The reasons for this step were as follows. The official steadily argued with him, somewhat after the following style: "The Government's proclamation says that I am only to protect those who accept this token. I do not want to kill you; therefore, as a temporary expedient, accept it, and thus save me getting into trouble. Further, if you as the Pastor refuse, how can I persuade others to bow before the storm?" In a weak moment the Pastor yielded, and others followed his example. It was not until long afterwards that he realised the full significance of his step, for in the East diplomacy and concession are deeply ingrained in the native mind. At that time he looked upon it as a means of helping the official in his dilemma and of shielding his weaker brethren. When the error of his action was subsequently pointed out to him by Mr. Orr-Ewing, he was filled with sorrow, and besought the Christians no longer to call him Pastor.

Pastor Chang never fully recovered from the terrible strain and exacting privations of those days, and though spared to see the work reorganised, the rebuilding of a new place of worship, and a considerable increase in Church membership, he passed to his reward in January 1904.

In the death of Pastor Chang the Church at Taning suffered a serious loss. He was a man endowed with a large heart and tender sympathies, and was ever engaged in labouring in the most unselfish spirit for others.

All, whether old or young, rich or poor, looked up to him as their best friend. All loved him, few

if any spoke evil of him, and the missionaries regarded him almost as a father. As a true Pastor, he was ever ready to respond to the call of the sick and suffering, and through his kindly ministrations not a few were brought to the Master's feet.

Deacon Li, for instance, one of Taning's brightest Christians, was never weary of relating how the Pastor had stayed till midnight at the bedside of his (Li's) dying wife, pointing the dying woman to Him who had opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers. And those words of comfort and instruction spoken then led Li to give himself to Christ the very night his wife was taken from him.

In his preaching Pastor Chang dwelt especially upon the Fatherhood and love of God. This seems to have been his great theme and he spoke upon it with great feeling. His personal regard and affection for the missionaries were warm and lasting. He manifested as few Chinese did or could the ability to appreciate in practical ways the discomforts and trials experienced by the foreigner when visiting and working in the mountain villages and homes. Frequently he would make enquiries concerning those who had left the district, while he never wearied of bestowing loving care upon those who laboured among his own people.

His thoughts and sympathies also extended to the honoured parents in the distant lands who had given loved members of their families for the mission field. For the sake of the light it may help to throw upon his character, it may not be altogether inappropriate to quote one of his letters to such parents :

"Specially addressed to

"The honoured and venerable Mr. and Mrs. Broomhall: Peace!

"Because God has answered prayer, and has caused us to receive the two dearly loved teachers Broomhall, all, including the writer, are delighted beyond measure.

"But, fearing that in the venerable hearts of both of you there is much thought of them, may the God who comforts comfort you, and cause you in all things to receive happiness to the full.

"May the Lord constantly care for us, and assist us in causing His word to be spread abroad in this place, taking to Himself the glory, and may He do the same in your midst.

"I invite you to look at 2 Thess. ii. 13. We trust the Lord's great ability and great strength to help us, and to free us from sin's bonds and cause many to be saved. I also invite you to look at 2 Cor. i. 20-22.

"May the grace of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ be constantly in the midst of your entire family, old and young, male and female.

Chang Chi-pen writes!"

Unfortunately, Pastor Chang was not very happy in his married life. His wife, whom he had married soon after leaving the Buddhist temple, was a source of constant trial. Though she conformed to his manner of life so far as to attend the Christian services, she never manifested any real change of heart or love for the things of Jesus Christ.

XVIII

IN THE TRACK OF THE TEMPEST

The student has no harder task than that of seeing a time of persecution in the clear light of truth. The dangers of a false perspective are as real as those of prejudice, and less generally recognised. We do well to fix our eyes on its heroic scenes . . . but let not history forget that persecution has a squalid background of cowardice, disorder, bitterness, and fanatic enthusiasm.—H. M. GWATKIN.

IN recording the death of Pastor Chang we have carried our story ahead of the general narrative, and it is necessary to return in thought once more to the year 1900. Six weeks before the ladies at Taning had laid down their lives, their two friends at Siaoyi, the Misses Whitchurch and Searell, had sealed their witness with their blood. These two workers were indeed the first members of the China Inland Mission to suffer a violent death during that terrible year. When the Mission premises were attacked by a raging mob they called the few Christians who were on the compound together for prayer. After committing themselves to God they commenced to sing, and in the midst of their songs of praise the mob burst in and beat them to death with pieces of broken furniture, finally throwing

their bodies into the baptistery. This was on June 30.

Several of the Christians who endeavoured to protect the ladies were severely wounded, while others were done to death in the villages. The Mission premises were looted and wrecked, the door leading into the building sealed up, and the work brought to a standstill.

As the news of this deed of blood became known, consternation seized the Christians far and wide. At Sichow the missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Peat with two children and the Misses E. G. Hurn and Edith Dobson, continued for some weeks to reside in the Mission premises, but on July 21 they were compelled to flee from the city and hide away among the hills, where they were ministered to with great fidelity for several weeks by Deacon Wang under cover of darkness. Suspicion, however, eventually fell upon him and he dared not move lest he should reveal the whereabouts of the foreigners, who were finally compelled by hunger to come out from their hiding-place. Though cheered for a time by a show of forbearance, they also were brutally done to death on August 30.

Nor were the Chinese Christians of this district spared. Many suffered severely when hiding in the hills and others were slain. It had at first been asserted that women and children would not be touched, with the result that many of them stayed at home to guard their property. Little respect, however, was shown to these promises, and these more helpless members of the Church were attacked and some of them slain. It was subsequently

estimated that some eighty converts from the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches combined were massacred in the Sichow district.

Farther south similar acts of blood and violence were enacted at Kichow. Among the converts there was a Mr. Yen, who when baptized had assumed the name of *Chin-chong* or Faithful, he having been impressed by this character in *Pilgrim's Progress*. When the storm of persecution burst over Kichow he and his wife were compelled to flee to the hills and hide with friends. They were captured, however, bound and dragged back into the city, where they were accused of injuring the people with magic —a strange charge for their persecutors to make. The official, probably in fear of the accusers, ordered that they should be beaten and then handed over to the Boxers.

It was not long before their captors dragged these two to a large temple, where they were faced with the alternative of either worshipping the idols or bearing the consequences. When they both refused to worship false gods their hands were bound behind their backs and in this attitude they were suspended by their thumbs to a beam in the temple. As they still declined to worship the idols they were beaten with rods while still suspended in this excruciating attitude, the crowd meantime mocking and taunting them because their Jesus in whom they trusted did not save them.

When these tortures did not break their resolution their shoes were removed from their feet and they were subjected to cruel torture, repeated

throughout several days, until Mrs. Faithful was utterly exhausted and nearly dead.

At length a fire was ignited and an attempt was made to burn Mr. Faithful to death, but the wood being damp would not burn, though the feet and legs of the poor man were terribly scorched. The majority of his tormentors interpreted their failure with the fire to God's interposition and left the temple in fear. The official, however, cast the sufferer into a dark dungeon, where he must have died had it not been for his faithful wife who, at considerable personal risk to herself, brought his food regularly and ministered to him. She died shortly afterwards in consequence of the injuries received, but he lingered on though he never recovered from the sufferings he had endured. The intense agony of those days appears to have affected his reason, and he was never again able to take charge of the work.

Several miles south-east of Kichow is a small village called Shanteo, and to this place Mr. and Mrs. Young from Kichow, Mr. and Mrs. M'Connell, with the Misses King and Burton of Hotsin, had gone during the month of June for a summer holiday. It was here they first heard of the peril which threatened them. Not realising in this secluded spot how widespread and how organised the persecutions were, they decided to withdraw to the neighbouring province of Shensi. On the day after their departure, July 15, they reached the foot of the hills, where they fell into the hands of some armed men who professed to be soldiers sent to escort them to a place of safety. The following

morning, however, at a lonely spot on the banks of the Yellow River, the whole party of missionaries, six adults and one child, were treacherously put to death.

The conduct of one young lad on this trying occasion deserves special mention. He was a Christian boy named Kwo Tien-shuen, a member of the Kichow Church, who had nobly volunteered to accompany and help the missionaries in their perilous flight. When they were attacked he was carrying in his arms Mr. and Mrs. M'Connell's little son Kenneth, who was only four years of age. He was ordered by the Boxers to put the child down and was given the chance of escape. "You can go," they said, "we do not want to kill you." Seeing that resistance was useless he reluctantly obeyed, but when he heard the child cry, "Tien-shuen, do not leave me," he took the child up in his arms again, and turning to the murderers said, "I also am a Christian; you may kill me too." And so they did, cutting him down with a sword while the terrified child clung to his neck.

Of the members of the Kichow Church several suffered martyrdom. One was Mr. Yuen, an old Christian over sixty years of age, who was first cast into prison for trying to prevent the looting of the Mission premises, and was afterwards put cruelly to death. Two others were Mr. Chang and Mr. Fan, both Christian farmers, the latter surrendering himself to the Boxers in the hope of saving the life of a worthless son who had been captured. The remainder of the Christians managed to escape, either by fleeing to the hills or by recantation.

In the comparatively small area with which this story deals, sixteen missionaries with three of their children and probably some forty Chinese Protestant Christians laid down their lives because of their faith in Jesus Christ, while many others bear on their bodies for the rest of their lives the marks of the Lord Jesus.

XIX

AFTER THE STORM

The inscriptions in the catacombs are cheerful all through the years of persecution: not till the times of suffering have passed away do words of Christian hope and joy give place to conventional and heathen phrases of lamentation. There is no word of bitterness in the catacombs. There is sorrow, there is hope, but never a curse.—H. M. GWATKIN.

IT is easy to generalise at a distance about persecution and its fruits, but few tasks are more exacting than the facing of the aftermath. There are the proud officials to be met, the sullen people to confront, and the broken sufferers to comfort. In this case also the dead had to be decently and respectfully buried, for in some cases their bodies had merely been cast to the dogs. A policy as to reparation and indemnity had to be determined upon and carried out by the officials. There was the work also of supporting the persecuted and of assisting those who had been robbed and ruined that they might commence life once more. And last, but not least, there was the delicate question, which required no little sympathy and courage, of restoring, if possible, those who under immeasurable stress and strain had denied their Lord.

For this solemn task a little band of eight missionaries re-entered the province in the summer of 1901, just twelve months after the terrible massacres had taken place. Shansi, of all the provinces in China, had suffered the most, for in that province alone, including some territory over the Mongolian border, 159 missionaries and missionaries' children had been done to death. Of the eight persons who composed this relief party four were members of the China Inland Mission—Messrs. D. E. Hoste, Archibald Orr-Ewing, Henrik Tjader, and Ernest Taylor. It would carry us far beyond the scope of this volume did we seek to follow in detail the movements of these friends and record the steps taken in settlement of the many complicated problems which demanded solution. Two matters only can be referred to.

In regard to the losses which the China Inland Mission had sustained, an estimate was prepared and handed in to the Governor of the province by Mr. D. E. Hoste, who informed him that the Mission did not purpose to ask for or to accept compensation. This act called forth a remarkable proclamation, of which the following extracts formed a part:

"I, the Governor, having made myself acquainted with the facts, find that the chief work of the Christian religion is in all places to exhort men to live virtuously. . . . Mr. Hoste has arrived in Shansi to arrange Mission affairs. He has come with no spirit of doubtful suspicion, hatred, or revenge, nor does he desire to exercise strong pressure to obtain anything from us. For the churches destroyed in

fifteen sub-prefectures and districts he asks no indemnity. Jesus in His instructions inculcates forbearance and forgiveness, and all desire for revenge is discouraged. Mr. Hoste is able to carry out these principles to the full. This mode of action deserves the fullest approval. . . .

"From this time forward I charge you all, gentry, scholars, army, and people, those of you who are fathers to exhort your sons and those who are elder sons to exhort your younger brothers, to bear in mind the example of Pastor Hoste, who is able to forbear and to forgive as taught by Jesus to do, and at the same time to exemplify the words of Confucius and to treat with kindness the unkind acts of others. Let us never again see the fierce contention of last year."

This proclamation was, by arrangement, placed in each centre where Mission premises had been destroyed—Taning, Sichow, Siaoyi, Kichow and Hotsin being of the number. It is worthy of comment that in this remarkable proclamation the name of Jesus in every case was elevated, which is the Chinese way of doing honour to a name.

In regard to the indemnity of the Chinese Christians, the Governor, without the slightest solicitation, offered to see this done. A list of reliable men in each district, with whom the Chinese Foreign Office could deal, was drawn up, and two leading Chinese Christians, one of whom was Pastor Ch'ü, were appointed as general overseers. A letter was then despatched by Mr. Hoste to the Chinese Christians in each Church affected, which contained among other things the following words of counsel:

"This business is of great importance, seeing that the life and death, honour and shame of many persons are involved. It is incumbent upon you in these unusual circumstances that you should have the mind of the Lord Jesus and be careful of the Lord's honour, and not simply have regard to your own affairs.

"Christians who have had relatives murdered, and are willing that they should have laid down their lives for the Lord's sake, and do not wish to report the case to the official, will be following the best course. If, however, they are not able to act thus, a statement of the facts may be made to the official that he may deal with the case according to law.

"Those who have been wounded and are maimed or disabled, but who have property and are able to support themselves and are willing to forgive their enemies, and therefore do not wish to report the matter to the official, will do well. If, however, they cannot do this, then the appointed leaders may inform the local official and he will carefully examine the case, after which it may be reported to the Foreign Office. The Christian widows and orphans who have been left without support will also receive help, and we have agreed on four ways of dealing with these.

"In cases of robbery the lists must be made out strictly in accordance with actual losses. There must be no carelessness or overstating, lest by your falseness the Lord's Name may be dishonoured before your enemies, and the Church will then have nothing to do with your affairs," etc.

After all arrangements had been settled with the Governor, Mr. Orr-Ewing personally travelled down through the district with which our story is concerned, interviewing the local official, being present at the official burying of the dead, and doing all that was possible to comfort the Christians and set forward the work of reconstruction. It was not, however, until the following year that two lady workers, the Misses Gauntlett and Rasmussen, both of whom had passed through the persecutions, were able to take up residence at Taning. For some years to come the Church was much in favour with the people, and several of the leading Christians exercised considerable influence in local Government affairs. Each year also saw encouraging additions to the Church, more than fifty families destroying their idols during the year 1903 alone. Yet side by side with this prosperity the work experienced a succession of heavy losses and serious trials. Pastor Chang, as already related, died in January 1904, and in the summer of the same year Miss Rasmussen, who had won the love and confidence of the Christians by her beautiful character, succumbed to an attack of typhus fever.

In the following spring Pastor Ch'ü, when on a tour of the western hills, was taken ill, and after a brief illness he also passed to his reward, deeply mourned by all the churches. Thus was the Taning district triply bereaved within little more than twelve months.

Pastor Ch'ü, as a man, had a strong and marked individuality, and as an evangelist had been eminently successful. His demonstrative nature

and frequent outbursts of praise were more after the manner of an early Methodist or Salvation Army leader than of a staid Chinese scholar. His whole-hearted devotion to Christ and his loyalty to the work of God, combined with his joyous disposition and childlike simplicity, made him a man greatly beloved. His exceptional gifts as a preacher and as a Chinese scholar made his removal a serious loss to the whole work of God in the province, especially to those local churches with which he was most directly connected.

In consequence of Pastor Ch'ü's death, Mr. Yang, who had been set apart as elder, and had for some time been in charge of the work at Kichow, decided to return to his home in the Taning district, and, while supporting himself by farming, give such time as he could spare to the oversight of the scattered village churches. This work he continued to do for a number of years, spending the greater part of his time in visiting the Christians in their homes and in ministering to them in their times of sorrow and trial. In all this he was a voluntary worker, receiving nothing either from the Mission or the local church.

One encouraging feature of the work during these years was the active part taken by the young men who formed a large proportion of the Church membership, but friction and jealousy unhappily began to manifest themselves among the leaders after the removal of the two pastors, and these things considerably hindered progress.

In addition to these troubles within the Church, the work suffered through a good many inevitable

changes in the personnel of the missionaries, and the station was heavily overshadowed by a succession of painful bereavements. In the spring of 1905 the Misses Dorothy Hunnybun and Hilda Carr were appointed to Taning, while Miss Gauntlett removed to another district on the occasion of her marriage to Mr. Ernest Taylor in 1907. Early in the following year an epidemic of typhus broke out in the city, which compelled the closing of the Girls' School and the Women's Bible Class. Miss S. M. Liddy, a young Australian of exceptional beauty, both of character and person, contracted this virulent fever shortly after her arrival at the station, and in April, in spite of all that love and skill could do—for Dr. John Carr and Miss Tippet, a trained nurse, tended her—she succumbed to this fatal disease.

For hygienic reasons the station was closed for the summer months, and as Miss Hunnybun was married to Dr. Carr in June and had removed to Pingyangfu, Taning was left with only one lady worker. But as the growing work among the women and developments in the schools and church life generally called for the guidance and oversight of an experienced missionary, Miss Jessie Hoskyn, who had laboured for many years at Pingyangfu and had passed through the Boxer persecutions, was appointed to take charge of the work, with Miss Carr as her colleague.

During the following autumn the station and district were visited by a gracious revival, of which we shall speak in our next chapter, and during the ensuing one the work steadily progressed. In the spring of 1909, however, the dread typhus appeared

once more, and Miss Hoskyn, after three or four weeks' illness, was called Home to her reward. She had devoted nearly twenty years of her life to China, and though she had passed through the terrible ordeal of 1900, she had gladly volunteered to return to the sphere where she had suffered, and where so many had laid down their lives.

It was also at about the same time that the Taning Church suffered the loss by death of Mrs. Yang, the wife of the respected and beloved elder. The death of these experienced workers, the serious illness from typhus of Miss Frances Brook who was visiting the station, and the marriage of Miss Hilda Carr to Dr. Harold Balme of the Baptist Missionary Society in the spring of 1910, which necessitated her departure to the provincial capital, were all painful and testing experiences to the Taning Church. But in spite of every difficulty, the Word of God grew and prevailed.

XX

REVIVAL AND TRAGEDY

Granted that the ancient world needed a searching reform, there can be no question that the Gospel began at the right end, with the individual and the family.—H. M. GWATKIN.

IN the midst of these months of death and change, the churches west of the Fen River were visited by an awe-inspiring revival. It was as though God Himself had come into the midst of His people, visiting His Church first with the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, and then with joy and comfort. This experience was nothing less than the being baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

It may not be without profit to recall that the workers in the province generally had had special reason to mourn the fact that several leading Church members and leaders had, through official patronage and worldly ambition, ceased to run well. These marked signs of spiritual declension, together with a widespread coldness on the part of many, provoked the missionaries to definite waiting upon God for a revival. The reports, too, of what God had been graciously doing in Manchuria led them to request the Rev. J. Goforth, who had been God's messenger

there, to visit Shansi. To this request Mr. Goforth kindly responded, and in the autumn of 1908 meetings were held at several centres in the province, all of which were attended by marked blessing.

At each of these gatherings soul-moving manifestations accompanied the preaching of the Word, these manifestations being characterised by a deep conviction of sin, by heart-broken confessions, by restitution, and great liberty in prayer. Men, women, and children appeared to be absolutely unconscious of the presence of any other than God Himself. Envies and jealousies which had eaten out the life of the churches as a canker were confessed and put away. Long-standing quarrels gave way to heartfelt reconciliations; dishonest transactions were acknowledged with deep contrition, and restitution made.

The city of Taning was visited by Mr. Goforth in September, a busy time of the year for the farming population, but none the less about one hundred and fifty Church members attended his meetings. In a very restrained description of these gatherings, Miss Hoskyns wrote as follows:

"I cannot say I enjoyed the meetings—they were too terrible for that. But we were just amazed at the power of the Spirit which led prominent members of the Church, leading workers, and many held in great respect to stand up and confess to dishonesty, to hatred and emulation, and even to gross sins. I will not go further into detail; we feel sure all is forgiven and put under the Blood. But it was wonderful to see the looks of relief and the changed faces afterwards, and to note the

happiness with which sacrifices are being made in order to realise the money to put things right. It seems as though the prayers of years have been answered.

"One of our deacons, Mr. ——, is a most sincere Christian, but is naturally a very proud man and sometimes difficult to get on with. At this mission he got up to confess to temper and wrongdoing, and Miss Carr says she has never known him as he is now."

These meetings at Taning seemed, however, to be only the preparation for fuller blessing at the autumn conference, which was held a month or five weeks later. What was experienced at Taning was only part of a great wave of blessing which was sweeping through the greater part of the Mission centres in the province. At Siaoyi the movement began among the schoolboys and spread to the Church members. Then a day or two later at the neighbouring station of Kiehsiu there were awe-inspiring manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit at meetings which lasted from ten to eleven hours. The conviction of sin was so deep that the whole congregation of Christians and enquirers cried out in agony for a long time. The noise of this, like the noise of Pentecost, was heard a long way off, the neighbours gathering around the building to enquire what had happened.

The schoolboys especially were in great distress, and Mr. Lutley left the platform to try and comfort them, but so great was their agony of mind that it was only by shouting into their ears that they could be made to hear the promises of God which

he quoted. All present seemed only conscious of God, and the most abject confessions of sin were made to Him. Some women who were not believers became terrified and rushed out of the chapel. Such experiences as these clearly demonstrate what is perhaps sometimes forgotten, that the work of the promised Comforter is to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, for times of refreshing can only follow the putting away of transgression: "Unto you first God, having raised up His servant, sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from your iniquities."

After Kiehsiu a Conference was held at Sichow, and in view of the blessing received there, Mr. Lutley sent a letter on to Taning requesting that messengers should be sent to as many villages as possible to urge the Christians to attend the meetings about to be held at Taning. The response to these invitations was at first disappointing, but more messengers were sent forthwith, and some who came were persuaded to return and compel their fellow-Christians to come in. These efforts were not without encouraging results, and a goodly company gathered together. It was not, however, until the afternoon of the third day of the Taning Conference that the real break came. In describing what took place, the actual words of two who were present, the Misses Hoskyns and Carr, will be used, but as their letters supplement one another, they will be combined as one narrative.

"To call it a 'break' seems almost a mockery—it was a mighty and awful manifestation of the presence of God. Mr. Lutley had just spoken with

great power on grieving the Holy Spirit, and any holding back seemed an impossibility. One man then confessed to years of backsliding and sin, after which Deacon Li prayed with intense earnestness for his own family. There were two more prayers, but no great move until Deacon Ts'ao began to pray in broken but distinct tones under tremendous conviction. Suddenly while he prayed a young man began to pray, confessing sin, and as suddenly he started back and cried out in an agony, 'O God, I dare not see Thy face,' and then fell right down on the floor.

"At that instant an awful wail of anguish broke out over all the hall. The schoolboys fell on their faces to the ground, the same cry being on every lip, 'My sin, my sin!' The schoolgirls and some of the women were also on their faces crying out for forgiveness. This must have lasted for at least half an hour. I trembled from head to foot, and shuddered at the thought of what the Judgment Day would be. God in His awful holy majesty had come down into our midst. I simply cannot describe the scene—it made one think of the Day of Judgment. God had come amongst us; all knew it, and every heart was open before Him. For myself I had the most intense realisation of the holiness of God and my uncleanness in His sight."

Thus far we have employed the words of those who were present. Quiet was at length restored by the singing of some well-known hymns and the reading of Scripture promises speaking of forgiveness and mercy. One hymn which in Chinese reads, "On the Cross my Saviour died," seemed

specially to have impressed and helped those present.

The next day was a day of great rejoicing, when twenty-three men, three women, six schoolboys, and five girls, all enquirers of some standing, were publicly received into the Church by baptism. The closing message spoken on this occasion was from the prophecies of Ezekiel, a word of encouragement and confidence in the power and work of the Holy Spirit. It was with faces literally aglow with the joy of God that the members of the Conference at length scattered to return to their own village homes.

Times of blessing such as these do not mean exemption from trial. As in the experience of Christ Himself, the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the voice of approval from Heaven may be followed by temptation in the wilderness, and this was so with the Taning Church. As already recorded, Miss Hoskyns' death and Mrs. Yang's Home-call both followed not very long after these times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, while further sickness and change in the personnel of the workers tested and tried the Church. But the story of one outstanding tragedy which befell one of the leading Christian families about this time may well be related as an illustration of the possible complications of Church life in the mission-field, and as affording an insight into that strange lack of justice which sometimes obtains in certain courts of law.

The family concerned was a somewhat large and complicated one bearing the name of Wang. During the great famine of 1878, Mr. Wang's elder brother

had died, leaving a widow with four young sons. About the same time Mr. Wang lost his own wife, and, in order to care more adequately for his brother's widow and fatherless boys, he decided to marry the widow, who was his sister-in-law. He did so, and five more sons and one daughter were the fruit of this second marriage. The relationship of these young men was naturally somewhat complicated, they being half-brothers on their mother's side but cousins so far as their fathers were concerned.

At the time of our story the eight eldest young men had married, and they, with their wives and children, all lived together as one large household. All but the first, third, and fourth brothers were Christians, and these three, who, it will be remembered, were sons of the first marriage, had, on account of opium smoking and other vices, incurred the displeasure of their stepfather or uncle, who, as head of the family, managed the home affairs. The third son, indeed, had, with his wife and two children, been turned out of the home and given a small farm in an adjoining village. In consequence of his vicious habits this farm was neglected, and when, as naturally followed, the young fellow was brought to great poverty, he became filled with bitter hatred against his stepfather, who had dismissed him from the ancestral roof.

It also happened that about this time the fourth son, a young man of some twenty-five years of age, became involved in a flagrant case of immorality, and his stepfather, in order to avoid expense and disgrace to the whole family, administered to him a severe public flogging. In consequence of this

Photo. *By Miss Mandeville.*

THE LARGE AND COMPLICATED WANG FAMILY.

The photograph was taken on the occasion of the wedding of one of the brothers.

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humiliation the two brothers, the third and fourth sons by the first marriage, were drawn together, and decided in revenge to co-operate in the murder of their stepfather. They knew that he slept in a room separated by some distance from the other part of the house, and, under cover of darkness, the third son came while his brother kept watch and murdered him.

When this crime was discovered in the morning, it was at first thought to be the foul work of robbers, and was duly reported to the official, but at the inquest suspicion fell upon the family itself. The mandarin therefore ordered that all the sons be tried. Fearing that their crime would be discovered, the two guilty brothers fled, but were subsequently arrested by soldiers, who were assisted by the fifth and seventh sons who knew their haunts. Although they were both brought to trial and their guilt fully established, they were set at liberty through the powerful influence of another official, who was the uncle of the murderer's wife.

This immunity from the penalty of their crime, combined with a desire to wreak their vengeance upon their brothers who had had a part in bringing them to justice, emboldened them to more desperate adventures. They openly threatened to murder their two brothers and to take possession by force of the old home and property unless freely reinstated and allowed to control the family affairs. To this end they associated with themselves a band of robbers, and kept the whole family in a state of perpetual alarm and suspense. The two brothers specially threatened dared not go out even into

their own fields alone or unarmed. In vain appeals were made to the official that the two lawless and guilty men should be arrested and punished, but these appeals being fruitless only made the aggressors more barefaced and daring.

At length the fifth and seventh brothers, after repeated family consultations, determined to take the law into their own hands. Their plan was to capture the two murderers, and to disable them for life by breaking their ankle-bones. This terrible decision was deliberately carried out, and the two young men, thus incapacitated, were brought home and placed under the care of their own wives and other members of the family.

The fourth brother gradually recovered from his terrible experience, but in the case of the third brother blood poisoning set in and he died in about a fortnight. The widow of this man, who, it will be remembered, had powerful official influence on her side, now accused her two brothers-in-law of the murder of her husband. They were arrested and cast into prison, and, being unwilling to pay the exorbitant sum of money demanded by the widow and her people, they were placed on trial for murder, in the course of which they were beaten over four thousand blows. For many months it was feared that they might actually suffer the extreme penalty of the law.

As these two young men had been much-respected voluntary preachers, the case absorbed the thought and concern of the whole church, and considerably interfered with the ordinary preaching of the Gospel. For some time it brought the name of the

Church into bad repute and greatly hindered the progress of the work; in this way it proved to be a master-stroke on the part of the great adversary to prevent the hoped-for ingathering after the revival.

There was, however, one bright side to this sad affair, and that was the attitude taken by the young men in prison. In spite of their sufferings, for they were heavily manacled, they spent a large portion of their time in the study of the Scriptures. Any characters they did not understand they wrote on slips of paper, which, as opportunity offered, they sent to a Christian teacher, who returned the slips with the pronunciation and meaning added. In this way they learned to read the whole of the Old and New Testaments. So impressed was the jailer with their behaviour and witness that he also professed faith in Christ, and was beaten five hundred blows for having shown the prisoners kindness.

This case was still pending a final settlement when the revolution of 1911, which overthrew the Manchu dynasty, broke out. During this great upheaval the city of Taning fell into the hands of the revolutionary party, who opened the prisons, so that the two young men, in common with the other prisoners, obtained their liberty.

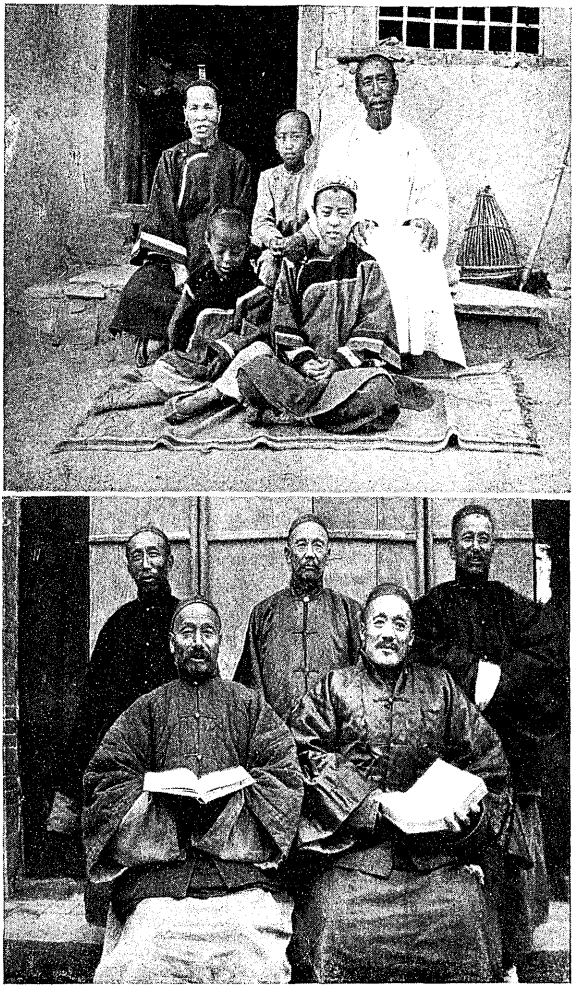
The remainder of the story of the Taning Church can only be rapidly sketched. When Miss Carr left to be married to Dr. Balme in 1910, Miss Elsa Johnson, assisted by Miss Maude Mandeville and two younger Danish workers, the Misses Jorgensen

and Fugl, took charge of the work, but at the outbreak of the revolution just referred to they were compelled to retire from the district. For the next two years the whole country round was so infested with and harassed by bands of armed robbers that it was not considered desirable for single lady workers to reside at Taning.

For many months the district was destitute of any official or responsible government, while the robber bands terrorised the people. The populace at length became so exasperated that they rose *en masse*, and, surrounding a house in which nine of these brigands were known to have congregated, set fire to the building and destroyed them all. In the adjoining county of Kichow more than forty robbers were slain at one time, the remainder being scattered.

In the suppression of these disorders the Christians took an active part. Deacon Ts'ao, a man of considerable ability and knowledge, who had been left in charge of the station, was much sought after at this time. Later, when a republican form of government was established, he was elected chairman of the local government board, as well as chairman of the educational committee. Unfortunately his time and strength were so taken up with this necessary and beneficial work that he resigned his Church duties in order to devote himself more fully to these and other responsibilities.

As head of the educational authorities in the county, Deacon Ts'ao successfully established a Government School for girls, with a Christian teacher. Several of the Christians also were given



DEACONS AND ELDER OF THE TANING CHURCH.

Top picture. Deacon Ts'ao, M.A., with his wife and family. Bottom pieture. Top row, from reader's left to right :—Deacons Ts'ao, Li and Wang. Front row, from left to right :—Elder Wang and Deacon Hsü.

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positions of responsibility in the Government Boys' School, and in several cases the idols in the village temples were destroyed and the buildings converted into schools. During this period the spiritual side of the work was chiefly cared for by Elder Yang and Deacon Li, while several of the missionaries paid visits to the district as opportunity allowed.

In spite of all the unrest and hindrances of these times, converts were still added to the Church, thirty-five persons being baptized during 1913. Good work also was being carried on in the adjoining county of Yungho by the Christians themselves. In the autumn of 1913 the Misses Mandeville and Fugl were able to return to the station, being joined in the following summer by Miss Trench. Their places have, however, more recently been filled by Miss Giles,[1] an Australian worker with fifteen years' experience in the field, and by Miss A. I. Hill, a more recent arrival.

The distinguishing features of the last few years have been an evangelistic campaign in the adjoining county of Yungho, organised by the Christians themselves, and the appointment of several new deacons. Summarising the whole district worked from Taning, there are now between seventy and eighty villages with resident Christian families, while public services on Sunday are conducted in from fifteen to twenty centres by the aid of a band of some thirty local preachers. From the days when Chang and Ch'ü professed their faith in Christ, more than five hundred persons have been publicly

[1] Miss Giles has since died.

baptized, not a few of whom have died, some of them as martyrs for their faith. In addition to the more than three hundred who are still alive and in fellowship, there are six hundred more under regular Christian instruction.

XXI

A FAREWELL VISIT

To the student who is willing to remember that men are men, and that even the revelation through the Christ must work on men through men, the advance of Christianity in our own time by settlement, by missions, and by general influence is even more impressive and suggestive of living power than the conversion of the Roman Empire.—H. M. GWATKIN.

WITHOUT attempting to follow the story of each station as fully as has been done with Taning, we purpose in this chapter paying a brief and farewell visit to the other centres all of which are linked by memory with the names of Pastor Chang and Pastor Ch'ü.

It was several years before the church at Siaoyi recovered from the shock of the Boxer persecutions and from the loss of their two beloved lady teachers. Miss Whitchurch's name, indeed, is still a household word throughout the district, where she has left an imperishable memory. The work of repairing the destroyed or damaged mission premises was taken in hand by Mr. John Falls in 1902, and shortly afterwards Mr. and Mrs. Shindler, assisted by Mr. Urquhart and Deacon Heh, took charge of the station. In those days the people came in crowds to hear the Gospel, Mr. Lutley testifying that he

never before preached to such audiences, while Mrs. Lutley was quite overwhelmed by the women visitors.

The valued help that Deacon Heh was able to render was unhappily not for long, for in 1904 he died, partly as a result of the severe suffering he endured during the days of persecution. His death removed from the work one who had been a most earnest and zealous servant of Jesus Christ. In the following year ill-health also necessitated the withdrawal of Mr. and Mrs. Shindler. Yet in spite of these chequered and trying experiences the cause prospered, some of the scholars manifesting a real work of grace in their hearts, while not a few families put away their idols.

One of the converts received into the Church at this time was the chief Buddhist priest of a richly endowed temple. Resigning his office and living, he rented a house near the city, and here began with great earnestness to lead others into the way of salvation he had but recently discovered. The Church also began to shoulder its own burden and to open new centres. In 1907 the firstfruits unto God were gathered in at Linhsien, a city some seventy or eighty miles away, which place was opened as a central station eight years later. In 1910 the Siaoyi Christians further undertook to bear all the expenses of the Church and school, apart from the teacher's salary, and in the following year they shouldered the rebuilding and enlarging of their own chapel.

As already recorded, Siaoyi participated in the blessing of the revival of 1908, the meetings here

being some of the most powerful witnessed. The effect upon the congregations assembled was simply overwhelming. In the autumn of 1914 this centre once more became a ladies' station, Miss S. Romcke, assisted by Miss L. Möller, taking charge of the work. At the same time Evangelist Wang Chih-tai, a man who had been greatly used in the south of the province and during special missions in other parts of China, returned to Siaoyi, his native place. Mention should also be made of Mr. Li, the son of one of the families who accepted Christ during Pastor Ch'ü's first visit. He not only took charge of the school, but was Mr. Urquhart's right-hand man in all the work of the Church.

It was also during 1914 that Mr. Hsieh, an evangelist from Central China, who has been much used in special missions in many parts of his native land, visited the province. At Siaoyi his ministry was greatly appreciated. His message, which could be summed up in the words, "Be thorough, be real," was delivered under many forms and with a great wealth of illustration. The simplicity of this man's life, his willingness to endure hardness—exemplified by his walking over rough and arduous mountain paths rather than ride—together with his evident earnestness and humility, did not a little to drive his words and messages home.

At Sichow, through lack of foreign workers, the work was for some time after the persecutions of 1900 entrusted to the care of Elder Yang. The spirit of forgiveness manifested by the Christians bore fruit in additions to the Church, though ten former members were for various reasons not re-

ceived back into fellowship. In 1906 Mr. Briscoe, who had been less than two years in China, took charge temporarily, and soon succeeded in winning the love and confidence of the Christians. In company with Kwo Shang-teh, of whom we have previously spoken, many villages were visited, and in several cases idols were put away. Some of the Christians, too, were so blessed that they made restitution in regard to matters dating back many years. Mr. Kwo Shang-teh proved to be a man of great strength of character, who gained the respect of the officials and people. Although unable even to write his own name, the official appointed him as one of the leading *shen-si* (official gentry) to assist him in all important matters. This was a position of no small temptation to one who came from so humble a station in life. He soon became one of the most influential men in the county, but unfortunately his status and popularity proved too much for him, and what adversity had not been able to accomplish worldly success did.

During the Boxer crisis, though two of his children were put to death and his wife seriously injured, he had still continued to bear a splendid testimony for Christ. Now, however, his influence and usefulness in the Church were for a time almost destroyed. In the mercy of God, he and others were very greatly blessed during the revival of 1908, when his love and zeal were graciously restored.

The work at this centre suffered severely through change of workers and the death of one, Mr. E. O. Barber, the station being for some time vacant until Mr. and Mrs. Mellow arrived in 1913. During these

years of change new premises were purchased and a building capable of seating some two hundred persons was converted into a chapel.

Considerable difficulty was experienced in recommencing the work at Kichow and Siangning, through lack of workers and by reason of local circumstances. Mr. and Mrs. A. Jennings, both of whom had passed through the Boxer persecutions, went in 1902 to succour the Christians and reorganise the Church, but ill-health prevented a prolonged stay. Mr. Yang, who then took charge and found himself faced with many petty jealousies, was upon the death of Pastor Ch'ü compelled, as already recorded, to return to Taning. Although some new converts were added to the Church and generous contributions were made by the Christians towards the repairing of the premises, lack of leadership on the part of the men appointed made it necessary, since no missionary was available, for Kichow and Siangning to be made out-stations of Hotsin.

Concerning Hotsin it is good to know that the Church members did not suffer so severely from the persecution as elsewhere. Although seven foreigners and two Chinese were martyred in this district, none of the Christians recanted, nor did they, except for a brief period, cease to meet for worship. This church was, in fact, the only one in the province not disorganised during these terrible times.

As soon as it was possible, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gillies, who had previously laboured in Central China, were appointed to Hotsin, and under their sympathetic ministry the Church was braced for new efforts. During 1903 twenty-three new members

were welcomed into the Church, one of these, Mr. Ts'ai, being a scholar of considerable repute who had endured no little persecution. Another was a Mr. Chao, a merchant, who abandoned a lucrative opium business in order to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

The friendly attitude of the city magistrate at this time was of considerable value to the cause. Not only did he show his personal goodwill, but he invited the Chinese helper in the opium refuge to reside in the yamen, that he, the magistrate, might receive daily instruction in the Word of God and prayer. The magistrate's wife also requested Mrs. Gillies to hold regular meetings in the yamen for the ladies residing there. These signs of favour predisposed the minor officials and gentry towards the message of the Gospel.

In the midst of these cheering conditions the work received a heavy blow by the moral failure of one of the trusted leaders. The very brightness of the outlook emphasised the shadow cast by such a cloud. Thank God the harvest of blessing still continued and the Church manifested real evangelistic zeal. The out-stations developed well, and in one village the village elder, who was the oldest member of the church, with the unanimous approval and support of the community, pulled down the two village temples and used the material to build a chapel.

One noticeable and healthy feature was the steady progress of Christian influence in family circles, parents bringing their children to the Lord and children influencing their parents in the same direction. Hundreds of opium patients passed through

the refuges and at Kishan, a neighbouring city, a little church was formed despite repeated disappointments. Generous gifts were contributed by the Christians towards evangelistic work, voluntary helpers engaged in labours abundant, and with the use of a tent the Gospel was preached in villages and fairs around.

It was the bold proposal of Mr. Chao, the one-time opium merchant, made some time in 1909, which resulted, after considerable difficulty, in a copy of the New Testament being presented by subscription to the youthful Emperor Hsuan Tung and the imperial family. Another event of some local importance was the completion of a new chapel. Some idea of the energy displayed in evangelistic work may be gained by noting that in one year the women evangelists, who were specially active, paid more than three hundred visits to the surrounding villages. Station Bible classes were also organised, with Mr. Percy Knight's help, to build up the Christians in a more thorough knowledge of the Word of God.

Early in 1914 Mr. and Mrs. Gillies resigned their oversight of this district to undertake evangelistic work in the populous and needy districts of Kiang-chow and Taiping, Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Lewis, who had previously laboured in West China, being appointed to take their place. At this time the membership of the Church at Hotsin was the largest west of the Fen River. The progress of this work in recent years, both in numbers and liberality, has been rapid and gratifying, it having now outstripped the parent church at Taning.

EPILOGUE

If the Christians were a minority in every province, that minority carried weight far beyond its numbers. In this we may compare the Protestants in France to-day. The Gospel attracted the best elements in society, both industrial and moral.—H. M. GWATKIN.

BETWEEN forty and fifty years have elapsed since the time when Chang the priest and Ch'ü the scholar sat together in the precincts of the Buddhist temple at Mulberry Crag, poring over the pages of the little Gospel which had come into their possession. At that time there was no Christian Church and there was no follower of the Lord Jesus Christ in the whole region west of the Fen River, but during the years covered by our story approximately fifteen hundred persons had learned to know the blessedness of sins forgiven and the helpfulness of Christian fellowship. Of these not a few sealed their testimony with their blood, or by lives gladly laid down in devoted service. To-day nearly one thousand communicants still remain, and to these may be added some fifteen hundred more who are under definite Christian instruction. Humble as the majority of these mountain folk are, last year they contributed out of their poverty no less a sum than £650 towards

church expenses, a generous offering when estimated in its Chinese equivalent.

And now Taning once again enjoys the oversight of a pastor who is one of their own people. Ho Shï-yen, the man of whom we speak, was set apart to this ministry by the Shansi Provincial Church Conference of 1918. He was converted when a lad, and has approved himself as a strong and tactful man. Though young when the Boxer persecutions shook the churches of the province, being then barely twenty years of age, he was used to strengthen and encourage men who, though many years his senior, were in danger of flinching before the storm.

When a deacon in the Church he entered the Provincial Bible Institute under Mr. Dreyer's care, where he successfully completed a two years' course of study. He is blessed with a good wife who is one in heart with him in his work, and he has gained the confidence and esteem of the Church, which mainly, if not entirely, supports him.

Pastor Ho is endowed with an attractive personality and is a helpful and arresting preacher, specially gifted with an original way of expressing himself. For instance, at a meeting of the Church leaders, when they were discussing how best they could help the weak and faltering Christians, he pleaded for love and patience rather than harsh and hasty methods. He was sure, he said, that "when Christ washed His disciples' feet He neither employed boiling water, which would have scalded them, nor icy water, which would have chilled them."

Let us then follow His way, which must have been both comforting and refreshing."

Such is the man who is now shouldering the burden laid down some years ago by Pastors Chang and Ch'ü, and for him we would ask the prayers of those who read this story.

THE END

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THE CHINA INLAND MISSION

WHAT IS IT?

An interdenominational organisation founded in 1865 by the late Rev. J. Hudson Taylor for the evangelisation of Inland China.

In 1888 interest was awakened in North America, subsequently in Australia and on the Continent of Europe, so that the Mission to-day is international, workers from no fewer than twenty-two different countries being represented on the field.

In 1865, when the Mission was founded, there were only thirteen Protestant Mission stations in China, all, with two exceptions, open ports. The C.I.M. alone has now 242 central stations and 1585 out-stations, all of which, with the exception of a few business bases at the coast, are in the interior. The most distant station, the capital of Sinkiang, north of Tibet, is more than three months' journey from Shanghai.

The Mission's aim is to preach the Gospel in Inland China and to found self-supporting and self-governing Churches. Already over a thousand separate Churches have been organised.

The Mission is supported by the unsolicited free-will offerings of God's people. Its total income during 1920 was £184,096. The Chinese Christians gave £14,221 towards their own Churches.

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